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THE

WORKS

OF THE

Long-Mournful and Sorely-Diſtreſſed

ISAAC PENINGTON,

WHOM

The LORD, in his tender Mercy, at length viſited and relieved by the Miniſtry of that deſpiſed People call'd

QUAKERS;

AND IN THE

SPRINGINGS of that LIGHT, LIFE, and HOLY POWER in him, which they had truly and faithfully teſtified of, and directed his Mind to, were theſe Things written;

AND

Are now publiſhed as a thankful Teſtimony of the Goodneſs of the LORD unto him, and for the Benefit of others.

"They alſo that erred in Spirit, ſhall know Underſtanding; and they that "murmured, ſhall learn Doctrine." Iſai. xxix. 24.

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A Fur-

A

Further Teſtimony to TRUTH,

REVIVED OUT OF THE

RUINS of the APOSTASY:

OR,

Several Things opened from the SPIRIT of TRUTH, touching the Way of Life and Salvation;

WHICH WILL

Reach to the Witneſs in the Hearts of thoſe whoſe Spirits are quickened, and whoſe Ears and Underſtandings are opened by the Spirit and Power of the LORD.

Written in a deep Senſe, and tender Love,

By ISAAC PENINGTON.

"Ariſe, ſhine; for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee. For behold, the Darkneſs ſhall cover the Earth, and groſs Darkneſs the People; but the Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his Glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee. And the Gentiles ſhall come to thy Light, and the Kings to the Brightneſs of thy Riſing." ISAI. lx. 1, 2, 3.

"O Houſe of Jacob! Come ye, and let us walk in the Light of the Lord." ISAI. ii. 5.

THE

PREFACE.

OH! how excellent and precious is the name of the Lord, in this our day, among his people, whom he hath gathered out of the worldly ſpirit unto himſelf, and whom he mightily defendeth in that wherein he hath gathered them! Inſomuch as it may now be ſaid inwardly, as it was of old outwardly, Pſal. lxxvi. "In Judah is God known; his name is "great in Iſrael. In Salem alſo is his tabernacle, and "his dwelling-place in Sion. There brake he the "arrows of the bow, the ſhield, and the ſword, and "the battle, Selah." Oh! what mighty things hath the Lord God done in and for the ſpirits of his people! How hath he ſcattered the darkneſs from about them, broke the chains which held them in captivity! How hath he riſen up againſt all the enemies of their ſouls, diſcovered their ſnares, ſnapped in ſunder the weapons of war, which the ſpirit of darkneſs hath formed and lifted up againſt them! And how hath he preſerved them in life, in peace, in purity, in holineſs, in his power and dominion (over that ſpirit, and the devices thereof) to this very day! He lives and reigns in power over all; and becauſe he lives, we live alſo; and becauſe he reigns, thoſe that are in his life and Spirit partake of his holy reign and dominion (over ſin, hell, death, and the powers of darkneſs) with him. Lo! this is our God; this is he whom we have ſought after, and waited for; and now his power is made manifeſt, now his righteouſneſs and ſalvation is revealed, how can our ſouls but be glad and rejoice

therein! Yea, how can we conceal the good tidings of the day of our God, and of the gospel of his salvation, which hath arisen and broke in upon us! How can we but desire to awaken the minds of men out of their sleep, and call upon them to shake off the drowsiness and blackness of the night, and to lift up their eyes towards the hill and mountain of God's holiness, that they also may behold the beauty of his day in others, and wait for the springing of his life and glory in themselves!

Now there is somewhat revealed of God, of his own nature, power, and Spirit, wherein we have met with him. To this we invite, of this we speak, concerning this we testify, as being that which the Father will honour, and wherein he hath and will appear. It is a poor, weak, low thing to consider of, or behold with the eye and understanding of man; but there is the riches, the glory, the life, the righteousness, the peace, the joy, the everlasting power of the kingdom in it; and to them that receive it in the demonstration of God's Spirit, and in the love of it, it is the wisdom of God and his power to the redemption and salvation of their souls. Indeed of all the wise builders (out of the true sense and power) it is rejected at this day, as it always was old; but to us who are called of God, taught by him, who have received an understanding from him, &c. we know the value of that which comes from him, being instructed by him not to judge according to the appearance, but to judge the righteous judgment; and in the righteous judgment, in the balance of the sanctuary, we find this little despised light to be elect and precious, even the foundation-stone, the corner-stone, and the top-stone of the building of God. And this we testify to men in true love, and from certain knowledge and experience which we have received from him that is true, and hold in him that is true.

Now this precious pearl (of which we testify) lies hid deep within; and thither must men come to know it, to purchase it, to possess it; and thither it is the desire

deſire of our hearts to bring men. Nor do we open the things of God before men to this end, that they might get a knowledge thereof into their brains, and feed on it there; but through tender love we bring theſe things a little into the very view of men (as the Lord enables us); not that they might ſtick there, but that having a taſte of the excellency and beauty of truth, they might be inflamed (with deſires after it) to travel thither, where it is to be had. Therefore dwell not in the notion, delight not in the outward knowledge of the thing itſelf (though the knowledge be ever ſo ſweet, pleaſing, ſatisfactory, and demonſtrative to the mind); but come to the everlaſting ſpring. Feel the meaſure of life in thy particular, and that will lead thee to the ſpring of life, from whence the meaſure comes as a gift from the Father to thee, to bring thee to the Father. And ſingly for this end have I been drawn to write what follows, in ſervice to the Lord, in faithfulneſs to him, in dear love to the ſouls of men, eſpecially of thoſe who have formerly been travellers, and have felt ſomewhat of the Lord, and yet retain deſires and breathings in their hearts after him. Oh! that the Lord would touch their ſpirits, diſcover to them the way everlaſting, and lead them therein to do that which their ſouls darkly deſire and ſeek after; to which there is no other way than that which hath been from the beginning, only there have been various diſcoveries and manifeſtations of the one way! But what greater diſcovery can there be than of the thing or ſeed itſelf, which the Lord hath been pleaſed to make manifeſt in this day of his glorious mercy, love, and power, whereof he hath raiſed up many witneſſes, whom he hath enabled (by his Spirit and power) to give a living, clear, certain teſtimony to? Happy is the ear that hears! for that alſo muſt be of God, as the meſſage and meſſengers are known to be.

A FURTHER

TESTIMONY to TRUTH.

Some QUERIES concerning CHRIST's Righteouſneſs, how it juſtifieth. Whether as inwardly revealed and dwelling in the Heart, or only as imputed, or both.

Query 1. IS not Chriſt the righteouſneſs and juſtification of the ſoul with God? Is not he made of God unto us righteouſneſs, and are not we made the righteouſneſs of God in him? How is this done? Is it not by being ingrafted into him, covered with him? Is this a meer imputation? or is it not rather a bringing the ſoul into the thing itſelf, and a drawing his nature, life, and Spirit over the ſoul, which was and is always righteous in itſelf, and ſo accounted of God? And he that is found in him, clothed with him, emptied of himſelf, and filled with him, is he not really righteous in the ſight of God?

Query 2. Is not the principle of life, which is from Chriſt, of the ſame nature with Chriſt? is not it alſo holy and righteous? yea, is not Chriſt the fulneſs in it? And he that receiveth this principle, doth he not receive life, receive Chriſt, receive righteouſneſs? Can the righteouſneſs of Chriſt be ſeparated from the ſeed of his life, nature, and Spirit? Can a man deny himſelf, go out of himſelf, give up to that, and be found in that, and not found in the righteouſneſs? or can a man come to righteouſneſs by imputation without that?

Query

Query 3. This principle or ſeed of life being from Chriſt, of Chriſt, and one with Chriſt in nature, though not of the ſame ſtature and fulneſs, yet hath it not the property and virtue of all that is of Chriſt in it? Do not all the promiſes belong to this ſeed, and go along with this ſeed? Doth not all that is good in man ſpring up from this ſeed? He that receives this, doth he not receive that which is righteous, and which makes him righteous, ſo far as he is of it, and in it? yea, the ſacrifice of Chriſt in the fleſh, the virtue thereof, the forgiveneſs of the Father for the ſake of his Son; doth it not go along with this? and is it not accepted for that man who is found here, and his iniquities (which he committed formerly) freely forgiven him for his name's ſake? Yea, are not his ſins afterwards alſo blotted out upon the ſame terms, he returning to this, abiding in this, and being found in this, and wherein the remiſſion of ſin, and the power againſt ſin, is alone to be felt and received for ever? So here is the imputation in its right place, and the right uſe and pleading of the ſacrifice of the Son, which here (in this its proper place, and in this ſtate) prevails with God, and not otherwiſe. For the kingdom, the righteouſneſs, the peace, the joy, the power thereof, &c. is placed by God in this ſeed, which is as a grain of muſtard ſeed: and he that ever finds it, muſt ſo find it; and he that ever joins to it, muſt ſo join to it; and he that ever receiveth it aright, muſt ſo receive it.

Query 4. Is not he that is born of God, new created in Chriſt Jeſus? and is not the new creature and new creation righteous in the ſight of God? When Adam was created at firſt, he was created in God's image; and was not that image righteous, and he righteous in that image? And when man is regenerated, renewed, brought again into the image, is not the image again holy and righteous, and he in the image?

Query 5. Is not faith the gift of God? And is it not holy, ſpiritual, and righteous in its own nature,

and in the creature to whom it is given? And being given to the creature, is it not owned by God as such, and so justified in the creature? Is not the faith which is of God, as righteous as the unbelief from the root of bitterness is unrighteous? And doth not God own and justify that as righteous, as well as condemn and reject the other as unrighteous?

Query 6. Is not the obedience of the soul in Christ, and from the principle of his life in the soul, and through his Spirit, righteous? nay, as righteous and justifiable in the sight of God, as the disobedience of the first nature is unrighteous?

Query 7. Are not all the works, which are wrought in God, righteous? and doth not he that doth truth, bring them to the light, that it may be made manifest that they are wrought in God, (John iii. 21.) Now there is no condemnation, but justification, to the deeds that are wrought in God; as there is no justification, but condemnation, to the works that are wrought out of him.

So that here now he that is indeed of God, he that is new created in Christ Jesus, he knows the Father and fountain of righteousness, the Son of righteousness, the righteous seed, the righteous faith and obedience of the seed, and the works which are wrought by the power and in the Spirit, which being brought to the true light, are always justified by it.

Concerning the True CHURCH and MINISTRY.

THERE is a great noise in the world about church and ministry. Many are affirming which is it, and many are doubtful and enquiring about it; and many are truly and groundedly satisfied, having received the knowledge of the thing from God, who is not deceived about it, nor deceiveth any, but giveth the true understanding of these and other things, to them

them that wait upon him aright; to wit, in his fear, and in the ſilence of the fleſhly wiſe part before him. Now I have a teſtimony to give concerning theſe things, which that ear which is of God can hear, and to that I deſire to ſpeak.

That is the church which is the ſpiritual body of Chriſt. The church is Chriſt's ſpouſe, he the huſband. The head is living, and ſo are all the members of the body. The head is anointed, and the oil wherewith the head is anointed, runs down from the head upon all the body; and that upon which the oil runs not, is none of the body. Now no outward thing can make one a member of this body; much leſs can any outward thing, way, profeſſion or practice, make a church. The church under the law was made ſo by outward things, by an outward gathering, an outward circumciſion, an outward law, an outward worſhip, *&c.* but the goſpel is a ſtate of ſubſtance, a ſtate of the inviſible things, of perſons inviſibly gathered by the Spirit into the life and power of God, inwardly circumciſed, inwardly baptiſed with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire, inwardly worſhipping in Spirit and truth, bowing at every ſound and name of the Lord Jeſus: and what is of an outward ſtate here, is brought forth and preſerved by the power of the inward appearing, and dwelling in it. So that this is the church now: a people gathered by the life and Spirit of the Lord; a people gathered by the power from on high, abiding in the power, acting in the power, worſhipping in the power, keeping in the holy order and government of life (both inwardly in their own hearts, and outwardly in their aſſemblings and walkings) by the power. Chriſt was made a king, prieſt, and prophet, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endleſs life; and in this power he gathers, governs, and preſerves his church, and miniſtereth from, and by, his Spirit and power in it. Now find this power of the endleſs life, find a people any where gathered by this power, and in this power; there is the church, there is the living body, there is Chriſt

the

the head, whose dominion and strength is over all, against whom the gates of hell cannot prevail.

And so for the ministers of this church. The same thing that gives to know the church, gives to know the ministers thereof; for they also are of God, called by him, receiving power from him, and abiding and ministering in that power. So that there are three things requisite to a true ministry, without which they cannot be right, or execute their office rightly.

1. *They must be called by God.* The ministry under the law, this was their warrant; they were called and appointed of God thereunto. Christ himself took not the honour to himself, but he was called of God to this priesthood, as Aaron to his. So the apostles and ministers, in the first publication of the gospel, were called and appointed by Christ. And when the everlasting gospel is again to be preached, God sends his angel with it, as Rev. iv. 6.

2. *They must receive ability and power from God.* The elders that were to help Moses, were to receive of his spirit. Under the law, the priests were to be anointed with the outward literal oil, and the ministers of the gospel are to be anointed with the inward spiritual oil. Their work is spiritual; and how can they perform it, but by the anointing, by that presence, guidance, life, virtue, and power of the Spirit, putting itself forth in them? The apostles themselves, who had been taught by Christ, who knew his conversation and doctrine, who were eye-witnesses of what they were to publish, and had received an authority and commission from him, yet were not to go forth meerly upon this call and commission, but to wait for power from on high; and when they had received the Spirit and power, then they were made able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit and power.

3. *They must abide in the power, keep in the power, feel the motion, virtue, and assistance of the power, in all their work and service.* They must neither pull down, nor build up, nor watch over, or oversee the flock in their

their own wiſdom, in their own ſpirit, in their own wills; but in the anointing, in the light and guidance of the Lord. This gathering, this building, this work of the Lord begins out of fleſh, out of man; and fleſh muſt be kept out of the whole carrying on of it.

And indeed, unleſs the miniſters of the goſpel be in the Spirit, in the life, in the power, how can they miniſter to the nature, to the ſpirit, to the life in the body? yea, ſo much as to the leaſt member in the body? They may miniſter outward knowledge to the man's wiſdom, to the man's underſtanding; but that is not the food that is to be miniſtered to the church, nor is that part in man to be fed by the true miniſter. But they are to miniſter life (living food) from the living fountain, from the head, from the Spirit of Chriſt in them, to the particular members under their charge; and ſo are to be good ſtewards and ſhepherds to the flock, giving every one their proper portion in due ſeaſon.

It was no ſmall matter to be a miniſter under the law. It was eaſy to err, and miniſter amiſs then. It was eaſy erring from the letter, unleſs great care and circumſpection was uſed to keep ſtrictly to it.

But it is a much more weighty thing to miniſter under the goſpel, to receive the power, to miniſter in the power, to that which is begotten and born of the power. And this is precious, and (without controverſy) of God, wherever it is found. But they only that are of God can hear and receive this miniſtry, (as 1 John iv. 6.) The uncircumciſed ear cannot hear here, nor the wiſe and knowing according to the fleſh. The wiſdom of God is fooliſhneſs to him, and the myſteries of his kingdom (the myſtery of his life, and the true godlineſs) are riddles, and direct madneſs to the eye of his wiſdom: ſo far is man degenerated from God, and bound down with chains of darkneſs and corruption. And he that would know the true church, or be of it, and hear the voice of God in his true miniſtry, muſt firſt take up the croſs to that part in

in him which is not of God, and receive from God the eye which ſees, and the ear which hears.

An OBJECTION concerning the Newneſs of the WAY of TRUTH, anſwered: With a tender expoſtulating Exhortation.

Object. *IT is objected againſt us, that this which we teſtify to, hold forth, and practiſe, is a new way, ſprung up of late, never known nor heard of in the world till ſome few years ago.*

Anſ. The light eternal, when it ſhineth out of the darkneſs, after the great apoſtaſy from the Spirit and life of the apoſtles, is new indeed to thoſe that were overwhelmed and buried in the darkneſs of the night, and ſo never ſaw or heard of it before; but it is not new in itſelf, but the ſame that it was from the beginning. This ſeed of life, this ſeed of bleſſing, is the ſame that was promiſed at firſt to bruiſe the ſerpent's head. The ſame which was promiſed to Abraham, when the goſpel was preached to him. The ſame that ſaved all (that believed in it) under the law; for it was not the types and ſhadows, and outward ordinances, which ſaved the ſoul then, but the ſeed, who was the Saviour from the beginning, and is the Saviour all along, even to the end: and it was the ſame which was the goſpel in the days of the apoſtles. They preached the ſeed alſo, the word of faith; Chriſt the way, Chriſt the power. Yea, all along the times of the apoſtaſy, this was the thing that preſerved the witneſſes, ſaving them from being ſwallowed up in the darkneſs, and keeping them alive in their teſtimony. And there is no other thing held forth now by thoſe who are in the truth, and raiſed up by the power of God in it to give teſtimony to it. This is it from whence life hath ſprung in any that have felt life, in all ages and generations. *This is the root and off-*

ſpring

ſpring of David, the bright and the morning ſtar. This is the deſire of all nations (Oh! that they knew their deſire) *and their ſaving health too*, without which they can never be healed! And, O ye! who ever felt any thing of God at any time, which was true, either in reading the ſcriptures, or hearing a miniſtry, or in private breathings, &c. this was it which gave you to feel in that ſtate, to deſire after the Lord, to turn from vanity, to long for communion with him, &c. Oh! that ye were ſo far in it now, as ye have been in times paſt! For there is no other thing we teſtify to you of (or deſire to draw you to) than that which was the root and ſtrength of your life in thoſe days. I remember that time very well, and what I was and felt among you, nor can I deny it at this day, but know that it was of the Lord; yea, my ſoul bleſſeth his name in the remembrance of it: but he that ſticks in the letter of that (having loſt the life thereof) is in a dead ſtate before the Lord; and in that dead ſtate hath not the true ſenſe and feeling, and then muſt needs err and miſtake concerning the truth, and (in that error) make uſe of his wiſdom and knowledge to reſiſt and oppoſe it. And this brings more death and darkneſs upon the ſoul, inſomuch as the very light there becomes darkneſs, and the very life dead; and if they could truly look inwards, they would ſee that they are not now there, what once they were, nor their duties or ordinances (as they account them) ſuch; but a blaſting and withering is come upon them, from the Spirit and power of the Lord, and they have loſt their beauty and freſhneſs, to all that with a true eye behold them. Therefore come back to the life; know that which formerly gave you life. Is it removed? ſtick not behind, but follow on. Oh! know the Lamb, who is the leader! And this is the great duty of duties to follow him whitherſoever he goes. He may in his tender mercy viſit in Egypt, in Sodom, in Babylon: but theſe are not the places of his reſt, nor ſo to be eſteemed, becauſe he once appeared, viſited, touched, refreſhed the ſoul there. But his dwelling-

dwelling-place is Sion, his holy city is Jeruſalem, where the Chriſtians dwelt with him before the apoſtaſy, and where thoſe that are redeemed out of the apoſtaſy are again to dwell. For the darkneſs of the night is not to diminiſh or take away any of the beauty or brightneſs of the day for ever; but the brightneſs and beauty of the day, in its riſing and glorious growth, is to overcome and ſwallow it up. Therefore loſe no more time in diſputings, in thoughts, in reaſonings, in conſultings, with that which will never adviſe the ſoul for its good; but wait on the Lord, that ye may come (through his leadings) to the true ſenſe of his ſeed, to the feeling of the nature of his eternal light and life in the heart; and that will put an end to diſputes; yea, ſcatter the diſputing mind, and powerfully determine the controverſy in the pure ſenſe and demonſtration of the Spirit. And he that knoweth any thing of this, let him abide here, wait here, live here, dwell here, and breathe to the Father here, watching narrowly over that which would lead from hence, and draw the mind into another way, wiſdom, and ſpirit. And thus, O poor ſoul! if the Lord touch thine heart, and open thine eye, thou wilt ſee thy beloved, even the choiceſt among ten thouſand; whom none can parallel, whom nothing is like to for excellency of nature, nor is there any can do for the ſoul as he! It is felt, it is experienced, it is teſtified unto you in the love, and in the truth: oh! that ye could hear! They are not the words of the letter, nor the obſervation of all that is in the letter, that can give life; but his voice gives life. The words that he ſpeaks (at any time) are Spirit and life; and if he ſpeak them not, *but* letter. So this is it we live upon; not the bread which we can make; not the things we can gather or comprehend from the letter; but the words which proceed from the mouth of God. Now this ſeed is his mouth, in and through which he ſpeaks to our ſouls, who fear before him, and wait upon him, in his own eternal and everlaſting ordinance, at the door and poſts of the everlaſting wiſdom.

wiſdom. And here we meet with all in ſubſtance, in life, in freſhneſs, in purity, in power, that ever we met with of God; and we meet with ſomewhat more alſo than we formerly met with. And this teſtimony is given forth to you in the love of God, from his tender bowels, which know your preſent ſtate, your wants, your wanderings, your deep prejudices, and ſettled hardneſs againſt his truth; yet he remembers the days of your youth, and cannot give over ſeeking after you, and crying unto you, *Oh! when will ye turn, when will ye hear, when will ye wait to feel life in the Spirit, and not increaſe death in you from the letter!*

A

CAUTION

TO THOSE

Who are at any Time touched with the Power of TRUTH; how they afterwards hearken to and let in the Enemy, and ſo thereby have the good Seed ſtolen away, the true Senſe loſt, and the Mind filled with Prejudices and Stumbling-blocks inſtead thereof.

THE Truth of God being received into the inward parts, is found to be of a living powerful nature, working mightily there for the cleanſing and redeeming of the hearts. Yea, this is certainly witneſſed, that as the mind joined to deceit, is thereby defiled; ſo the mind joined to the truth of God, is by its power and virtue purified.

Now

Now having felt this, and being filled with the love and good-will of God to the ſouls of others, how can we but teſtify it to others, who ſtand in need of God's truth (and its cleanſing property and virtue) as well as we; eſpecially being thereunto moved and drawn by the Spirit of the Lord?

Now when the Lord giveth forth the ſound in its power and life, it many times pierceth deeply through the earthly veil, and reacheth to its own; which (being reached to) anſwers to the teſtimony, ſaying, It is Truth. So here is a beginning of the work of God in that heart, the ſoul being touched with his truth, feeling it inwardly, and yielding in ſome meaſure to the overcoming virtue and power of it.

But then comes the ſubtil one, whoſe deſign and labour is to undermine and overturn the work of God in the ſoul; and he begets doubts, and jealouſies, and queſtionings, both concerning us, and concerning the doctrine taught by us, to ſuggeſt into the mind, as if it were not (nor indeed could be) of God: and ſo bringing the diſpute and determination into another part than where truth got entrance, he eaſily ſways the mind to determine againſt its own former feeling, and to turn from that work which was begun to be wrought in it by God, and from the worker alſo. And thus many poor hearts are entangled and carried back into captivity, who began to feel the ſtirrings of truth in their hearts (wherein is the power of redemption) which would have redeemed them as well as others, had they received it in the love of it, and became ſubject to it.

Oh! it is a precious thing to receive from God a ſpirit of diſcerning, which gives ability to diſcern his Spirit from the ſpirit of deceit! yea, it is impoſſible to be preſerved in the right Spirit and way, but as this is felt. For how can the Lord be received in all the motions and operations of his Spirit? or how can the contrary ſpirit be turned from in all its ſubtil devices, twiſtings, and reaſonings in the mind, unleſs there be a diſ-

a diſcerning (in the true light of the Lord) what is of the one, and what of the other?

And ye that would not be deceived, ſink deep beneath the thoughts, reaſonings, and conſultations of the earthly mind, that ye may meet with ſomewhat of the kingdom and power (which carries its own evidence and demonſtration with it) and may be gathered into it, and find a ſenſe, knowledge, and judgment there, which never was deceived, nor can deceive. Know the elect of God, which the deceits paſs over, and cannot reach; for its nature and birth is beyond them. It came from the light of the Father. It lives in the light of the Father. It ſees in that light; yea, there its judgment and underſtanding is, where deceit never had power to enter. But he that conſiders as a man, ſees as a man, judges as a man, concerning the things of God, by what he can gather out of the ſcriptures, or conclude from his own ſenſe, knowledge, and experience, he may eaſily err; yea, indeed, he is in the way of error in ſo doing. For the pure religion, the pure knowledge, the right judgment, the living faith, begins in the power and demonſtration of the Spirit; and theſe are its limits, out of fleſh, out of man, out of his will, out of his wiſdom, out of the compaſs of his comprehenſion. And he that paſſeth not theſe bounds, never meets with the life, power, and virtue of truth. He may meet with a body of notions and formed knowledge, wherein he may tell of the fall of man, and reſtoration by Chriſt, and very exactly, according to a literal deſcription: but the life, the true knowledge, the powerful virtue is another thing, and is met with in another country, whither man cannot travel, but as he is ſtripped of himſelf, and new formed, made and brought forth in another.

Oh! therefore, ye that deſire after the Lord (that would be his, that would feel him yours, that would know his truth in the life and power of it) wait for the demonſtrations of his Spirit; learn to diſtinguiſh inwardly, between his teachings from his Spirit, and

the teachings of another ſpirit from the letter. For it is ſo indeed: that other ſpirit would have taught Chriſt ſo; and he will teach any elſe ſo, that will hearken to him. Now he that is taught ſo, and follows ſuch teachings, wanders from God, is not accepted with him, but follows that which leads from him, under a pretence and appearance of leading to him. And here hardneſs and deadneſs grow and increaſe, the ſoul being turned from that which is living, and alone able to give life.

Queſt. *But how may I do, who am weak, and full of doubts and fears, to keep in the ſenſe of truth, and to come to a certainty that I am not deceived therein?*

Anſw. To thee, who putteſt this queſtion in the uprightneſs and ſimplicity of thy heart, I have ſomewhat to ſay.

1. *Mind how thou waſt touched*, mind how thou waſt reached, obſerve what ear was opened in thee, and breathe to the Lord to keep that ear open in thee, and the other ſhut. For this I can aſſure thee in the truth of God, that with that ear which the Lord opened to truth (which thou felteſt his Spirit unlocking in thee, and letting in truth by) I ſay, with that ear thou ſhalt never be able to let in any thing afterwards contrary to truth. But if the enemy can open the other ear, that will hear his prejudices, his jealouſies, his doubts, his fears, his temptations, and let them in, to thruſt out that which entered at the other ear. Now canſt thou not diſtinguiſh, O poor ſoul (a little to help thee) between that which brought ſome ſenſe of truth into thee, and that which riſeth in thee againſt truth? Oh! fear before the Lord! oh! watch and pray, that when the tempter comes, thou enter not with him into temptation, and ſo loſe thy union and growth in that which is invaluable.

2. Keep thine eye and heart upon the precioufneſs of what thou felteſt. Oh! remember, how freſh, how warm, how living it was; how it reached, how it overcame, how it melted. The remembrance of this

(cleaved

(cleaved to in the mind) will be a ſtrength againſt the temptations and ſubtil devices of the enemy.

3. *Meddle not with the things that the enemy caſts into thy mind.* Conſider not whether they be ſo or no. He that conſiders of a temptation (in many caſes) hath let it in, and is overcome already. When Eve did but hearken to what the Serpent ſaid, how ſoon was ſhe loſt and gone? The enemy many times brings temptations beyond the ſtate, capacity and ability of the ſoul to determine. Theſe things, at preſent, are too high for thee. Thou haſt not yet received a proportion of life from God to determine them by; and if thou run beyond thy meaſure, and determine things in thy mind, which as yet are beyond thy reach, thou muſt needs run into the ſnare.

4. *The preſent determining of theſe things would not be of ſo great advantage to thee, as thou mayeſt apprehend.* Why ſo? Becauſe the enemy hath many temptations and devices of the ſame kind (as well as of other kinds) which he would bring one after another. And when he brings a ſecond, a third, &c. that which engaged thee to conſider of the firſt, would engage thee alſo to conſider of the reſt. And if thou couldeſt find one anſwered, and not the other, that would appear to thee as ſo much the more weighty, and thou wouldſt hardly be able to eſcape conſenting to the tempter therein. Therefore the way is to keep out of him, in the upright ſenſe of what the Lord wrought in thee; for ſo far he is with thee, and abiding there, thou art out of the enemy's reach. But being drawn by the enemy to conſider of things that are out of thy reach, thou therein layeſt thyſelf open to his ſnares and betrayings.

5. *Mind what was forbidden thee, or required of thee in that time, when thou felteſt the warmth from God.* For there is then an heavenly voice, and an heavenly viſion moſt commonly in the heart, though the enemy turns the mind, as much as may be, from heeding it. There is then oftentimes ſomewhat of the worldly nature and courſe diſcovered, or ſomewhat of God's

will made manifeſt; ſomewhat that thou doſt (or haſt done) which then thou ſeeſt to be not of the Father, but of the world; and ſomewhat perhaps of the Father, which thou knoweſt thou oughteſt to become ſubject to, but thou art afraid of the croſs, or ſhame, or wouldſt fain have ſome more clearneſs firſt. Oh! call this to mind afterwards; and if ever thou wouldſt receive life, and come into union with God's truth, and receive his Spirit and power, and be eſtabliſhed therein; become obedient to the heavenly viſion! Conſult not with fleſh and blood, but enter into the obedience of that very thing, which was forbid or required, be it little or much. This is the right way, this is that thy mind ſhould be exerciſed in. And if thy mind be exerciſed faithfully here, the Lord will ſtrengthen thee againſt the tempter, when he comes with his temptations and ſubtil objections. But if thou falter here, and become unfaithful in the little, thou art not like to meet with more, no nor with the preſervation of the Lord in that little. And indeed this is the cauſe of the miſcarriage of many, becauſe they received not that little which was made manifeſt, in the love of it; but had pleaſure in the unrighteouſneſs, and ſo lingered in pleaſing the ſpirit of the world, both in themſelves, and others, when they were called by the Lord to quit it, and travel out of it.

6. *Wait for the renewings of life and ſenſe in thee from God*; wait for another viſit, wait for another touch and demonſtration of his Spirit. Where didſt thou meet with it? Go thither again, wait there again, and look up to the Lord to ſtay thy ſpirit till he appear again.

But, oh! take heed, that before the light ariſe again, before the life ſtir again, thou be not gone (by hearkening to temptations) into an incapacity of knowing or receiving it. For this is the way of the Lord, the experienced way; after him (after the touches of his truth) comes the tempter with his reaſonings, deceits, likeneſſes, &c. Now the Lord is trying thee, how thy

thy heart will ſtick to him: and if thou come off from the temptation, if thou ſtand clear of the enemy, the Lord will appear to thee again; ſtrengthen thee, comfort thee, open more to thee, lead thee further in the way of life, and nearer to the power and purity thereof: but if thou draw back from that, wherein the Lord began to work, the Lord's ſoul hath no pleaſure to appear any further to thee, or work any further in thee.

And one thing I will tell thee. If thou let not in the enemy's temptations, but abide (under the clouds, under the ſtorms, under the tempeſts, under the confuſed reaſonings, fears, doubts, and troubles) looking towards the Lord, waiting for him, and not making a league with the enemy againſt him in the mean time, the Lord will certainly appear; and when he doth appear, thou ſhalt find one of theſe two effects.

Either the power of the enemy's objections, or temptations, will be ſo broken, as thou ſhalt not then heed them; or they will be ſo anſwered by the appearance and light of the Spirit of the Lord, as thou ſhalt be ſatisfied about them. Now which of theſe is the better for thee, the Lord God knows, and that thou ſhalt be ſure to receive from him in that hour; neither will he leave thee, but ſecretly ſupport thee in the mean time; thy eye and mind being towards him.

The light and power of the Lord, when it ariſeth, ſcatters and breaks that into pieces in the mind, which was very powerful before; ſo as the ſoul doth not now ſo much as mind the conſidering or knowing of that, which the enemy hath made it believe was ſo neceſſary for it to know. For mark; that which cauſeth me to grow, is the feeling of life, the ſenſe of the Lord's preſence and power with me, the living knowledge, the knowledge which quickens, and gives life. Now, when the life ſprings, when the light ſhines, when the Lord in the power and precious viſitations of his truth, reacheth to my heart, this is preſent with me. Then what matter I thoſe objections and prejudices, which the enemy caſts into my

mind? Nay, I cannot heed them, being taken up with another thing of a deeper nature. Thus have I often found it by experience; all that troubled me, and that I doubted of, vaniſhing in a moment; that being preſent with me, and prevailing in me, which puts an end to all thoughts, reaſonings, and diſputes.

Again, it pleaſeth the Lord at other times (when he ſeeth good) to open the mind, and let it into the ſight of thoſe things (it waiting upon him, and letting them alone his ſeaſon) which of itſelf it could never have waded through. Thus alſo have I ſeen the objections, and ſtumbling-blocks concerning this precious people (who are of God, as the firſt-fruits of his powerful viſitation after the apoſtaſy); concerning their principle, way, doctrine, practices, &c. opened unto me in the clear light of God, and in the holy demonſtrations of his Spirit; inſomuch as I have manifeſtly ſeen, and been fully ſatisfied, that what was objected in my own heart, and is objected to in the hearts of others, hath been from the ſubtil accuſer of the brethren, who beareth falſe witneſs againſt them, and would draw as many as he can to partake in his falſe teſtimony, and ſo alſo to become falſe witneſſes againſt God, his truth and people. Therefore beware, all ye that deſire after the Lord, and would meet with the reſt and ſatisfaction of your ſouls in him, how ye be prejudiced againſt that, whereby God worketh in others, and whereby he hath appointed to work in you, and all whom he worketh in. For he hath ſent his Son to give life, and he will not give life by another. And he hath appointed his Son ſhall be received as a principle, as a ſeed of life, though as little as a grain of muſtard-ſeed; yet thus muſt he be received; and in this his low appearance hath he the preſence of God with him, and his power and authority; and what he, this little ſeed (though ever ſo little) requires, teaches, forbids, &c. muſt be obſerved. But there is none upon the earth can own or ſubmit to this, but he that becomes a child alſo; yea, a very little child. Man's ſpirit, man's wiſdom, man's knowledge,

ledge, man's religion, man's zeal, &c. is too big to enter here. Men are too wiſe, too knowing, too rich from ſcriptures and experiences to ſubmit to this; as the Scribes and Phariſees were to ſubmit to Chriſt's appearance, doctrines, and preachings, when he appeared among them in that body of fleſh. Therefore come into the true feeling, out of the dead knowledge into the living ſenſe, where life, power, righteouſneſs, yea, the peace and joy of the kingdom, is taſted of, and in ſome meaſure witneſſed by thoſe, who bow down in ſpirit before the leaſt or loweſt name or appearance of Jeſus; the loweſt degree and meaſure of whoſe life is King and Lord over death for ever.

An OBJECTION againſt the PRINCIPLE, which in Faithfulneſs to GOD, and in Love to Souls, we bear Witneſs to, briefly anſwered.

Object. *MANY do believe, and in that belief do object againſt it, that it is a natural principle, and* but *a natural principle: and ſo, in its utmoſt improvement, could lead but to the ſtate of Adam's nature, and not to the redemption and new life, which is in and by Jeſus Chriſt.*

Anſ. I can grant that it is natural, in a ſenſe; but not in the intended ſenſe. It is a principle indeed of God's nature, of Chriſt's nature; but not of man's nature. It is that which ſtands a witneſs in man againſt him, when he falls and trangreſſes. It is a light indeed that ſhines in his conſcience; but it was before his conſcience was, and is of an higher nature. Man is earthly (with his underſtanding, knowledge, reaſon, judgment, conſcience); but the light that ſhines in him (even in his dark, hard, unregenerate, earthly heart) is heavenly; ſuch as his darkneſs cannot com-

prehend, though it ſhine in his darkneſs. But wouldſt thou in true underſtanding know what it is? Feel it; come out of that darkneſs where it finds thee, into that light where it dwells, and then thou wilt know it indeed, and be able to judge of it better. Now I will tell thee how we know it to be the light of the new covenant. Why thus: Becauſe we find it diſcover to us the new covenant, and lead us into it; yea alſo ſhew us the ſins againſt the new covenant, and furniſh us with power from God againſt them, and preſerve us out of them. And with this demonſtration indeed, our hearts are ſatisfied; though we could alſo ſay further, we have witneſſes, both in heaven and in earth, concerning this thing, whoſe teſtimony fully concludeth it, to the full ſatisfaction of the ſoul, where it is heard and felt.

Some QUESTIONS and ANSWERS concerning the New Covenant; opening the Nature and Way of it, as it is experimentally felt in the Heart, and witneſſed to in the Holy Scriptures.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is the New Covenant?*

Anſw. It is a new agreement between God and the ſoul, different from that former agreement, which was between God and the people of the Jews. It is a precious glorious covenant, containing precious promiſes on God's part, and as eaſily to be obtained on the creature's part as can poſſibly be. It is a covenant of the eternal love of God; of life, peace, and reſt to the ſoul; of the power of the Lord ſtretched out for the ſoul, to deliver it from Egypt; carry through the wilderneſs; bring into the Holy Land; giving it its proper poſſeſſion and inheritance there; and maintaining it therein againſt all its

its enemies. Yea, this covenant contains very precious things, which the ſoul finds great need of, and rejoiceth in the ſenſe and preſence of, when they are felt flowing from the covenant into it; as writing the laws of God in the heart, putting his fear in the inward parts; yea, putting his own Spirit within, to be a fountain of life and ſtrength there, whereby he cauſeth the ſoul to walk in his ways, and preſerveth it from departing from him. Likewiſe in this covenant God becomes the teacher, who createth in the ſoul a capacity to learn, and cauſeth it to heed and profit. And in this covenant there is a forgiving of iniquity, and a remembering of ſins no more, but a deſtroying and rooting out of that which cauſed to ſin, and an healing of the backſlidings of the ſoul, and a loving it freely.

Queſt. 2. *How is this covenant made with the ſoul?*

Anſw. In Chriſt the ſeed, who is all in this covenant. He is the light of it; he is the life of it; he is the power of it; he is the righteouſneſs and ſanctification of it. By coming into him, the ſoul comes into this covenant; by abiding in him, it abides in this covenant; and by growing up in him, it grows up in this covenant.

Queſt. 3. *Is this an abſolutely free covenant? or are there any terms or conditions required of the ſoul in it?*

Anſw. It is abſolutely free in its own nature. It comes from the free love of God, it contains in it the free love of God, it is freely offered to all to whom it is offered, it is freely given to all to whom it is given. Here is no price, nothing of the creature's required for it; all that is required, is the creature's receiving of it, and giving up to God in it. And here, and after this manner, many things are required of the creature, without which the creature can never come to receive the covenant, abide in it, or reap the bleſſings contained therein. This the ſcriptures abundantly teſtify to; as alſo the experiences of thoſe who know and feel the nature and virtue of the covenant.

Queſt. 4. *What things are required in this covenant according to the ſcriptures, and according to the experiences of*

of thoſe that enter into it, and reap the fruits and benefits of it?

Anſw. 1. This is required, that when the Lord calls, when the Lord quickens, when the Lord toucheth the heart, openeth the ear, giveth a faculty and ability of hearing, that then the Lord be hearkened diligently unto, the ear (which he hath opened) kept open to him, and that that whereby he openeth the one ear and ſhuts the other be kept cloſe to, and he waited upon therein; the true ear may be more and more opened by him, and the other ear (which is apt to hearken to and let in the enemy) more and more ſhut. Who is there among us that hath not felt the Lord God requiring this of us? Wherein, as he hath been anſwered, the work of God hath gone on in us; and as he hath not been anſwered, the work hath gone backward, and not forward. And the ſcripture bears witneſs to the ſame, as Iſai. lv. 1, 2, 3. where the free covenant is proclaimed; yet there is ſomewhat even there required. "Hearken diligently: come and eat "ye that which is good, and let your ſoul delight "itſelf in fatneſs. Incline your ear, and come unto "me; hear, and your ſouls ſhall live; and I will "make an everlaſting covenant with you, even the "ſure mercies of David."

2. Repentance is required, turning from the old unclean nature and ſpirit, and touching it no more; but cleaving to that which hath power againſt it, and preſerveth from it. This alſo is felt and witneſſed to be required of God now, and was alſo teſtified to of old, as 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. "Touch not the unclean "thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father "unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, "ſaith the Lord Almighty."

3. Faith, believing the teſtimony of truth, and receiving the Spirit's baptiſm, is required. He that will enter into this covenant, muſt believe the teſtimony of the goſpel (the record of God concerning his Son) with the faith which is of him, and muſt be circumciſed, baptized, renewed, and changed by him.

Now

Now he that doth this ſhall be ſaved, as Chriſt promiſed, Mark xvi. but he with whom is the power of life and ſalvation did not promiſe that any ſhould be ſaved otherwiſe.

4. Obedience of the goſpel, ſubjection to Chriſt in the rule of his Spirit, and keeping of his commandments, is required. For as the firſt covenant required the obedience proper to it; ſo the ſecond covenant requires the obedience proper to it. And as there was no ſalvation, or ſtanding in the firſt covenant, without the obedience thereof; ſo neither in the ſecond, without the obedience thereof. He that will enjoy the peace, the righteouſneſs, the juſtification, the life, the power of this covenant, muſt live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, fulfil the will of the Spirit; keep to the ſeed, keep to the anointing, that the evil one touch him not; that the interrupter, the ſlayer, the deſtroyer of life in the heart, have not power over him, as he hath over any out of the limits of this covenant. For within it are all the good, but without it the evil things, the dangers, the temptations, the ſnares, the death and deſtruction of the ſoul; and whoever wanders out of the covenant, cannot but meet with them, and acknowledge it to be ſo, if he be in the true ſenſe. Therefore there muſt be a great care to abide in that which hath gathered, in that which hath quickened, in that which giveth the true ſenſe and underſtanding, and keepeth out of the wrong. How tender, how free was the love of Chriſt to his diſciples! yet he bids them abide in his love, and tells them how they ſhould do it: "If ye keep my commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love, even as I "have kept my Father's commandments, and abide "in his love."

Queſt. 5. *But how ſhall the ſoul be able to perform all theſe things? Are they required of it in its own ſtrength, or doth God undertake to perform and work all in it?*

Anſw. Not at all in its own ſtrength, will, or wiſdom (theſe are eternally ſhut out of this covenant); but

but in the ſtrength, life, and power, which flows from God in the covenant.

Queſt. 6. *How ſhall the ſoul receive this ſtrength, life, and power?*

Anſw. By embracing it as it comes, cleaving to it, panting after it, patiently mourning and waiting for it. (The viſion of good will come to that ſoul in the Lord's ſeaſon, and will not tarry). By not deſpiſing the little, and looking after more before the little be received, but thankfully entertaining the beginnings of life, the beginnings of the holy inſtructions, the firſt drawings from off the ſpirit and nature of this world, in whatever it be. He that diſputes not concerning the thing, but receives it juſt as it appears, in a ſimplicity and uprightneſs, watching thereto, he ſhall be bleſſed of the Lord, and meet with the deſire of his ſoul in the Lord's ſeaſon, when the Lord hath fitted and prepared his heart for it. Now this is ſo little and ſtrait a door, ſo poor and low a beginning, as the wiſdom of man can never enter at it; and if there ſhould be a little entrance in the overcoming power of life, yet that wiſdom will drive the ſoul back again preſently. Let me know the doctrine firſt, ſaith the wiſe man; I will underſtand the doctrine thoroughly before I will change my preſent way. No, ſaith Chriſt, "He that doth his "will ſhall know of the doctrine." Thou ſhalt know a little, which will reach to thy heart. There thou muſt begin; and being faithful there, thou ſhalt know further of the doctrine; but being unfaithful there, thou mayeſt be ſtumbled and prejudiced againſt the doctrine, but never be able to know it. Oh! the myſtery of life! Oh! the hidden path thereof, which none can learn but thoſe whom the Father teacheth! But many think to learn in that, which ever was, and ever will be, ſhut out. If Chriſt would lay his doctrine before them, and make it good to their underſtanding, they would receive it. No, no; they muſt bow to Chriſt, to his name, to his power, to his will, to his way of manifeſting his truth; he will not bow to theirs.

Queſt.

Queſt. 7. *What are the ſins againſt this covenant, and what effects have they?*

Anſw. The ſins againſt this covenant are chiefly unbelief in the power, and diſobedience to the power, which are of a deeper nature than the ſins againſt the the firſt covenant, and have more dangerous effects. The refuſing of this covenant is more dangerous than the refuſing the covenant of Moſes. And the breaking of this covenant; to wit, the ſtarting back from God (through an heart of unbelief) here, is more dangerous than the breaking of the firſt covenant.

Queſt. 8. *Why can this covenant be broken? Hath not God undertaken all in it?*

Anſw. It is an agreement between God and the ſoul, wherein things are required of the ſoul, through the life and ſtrength which flows from the covenant. And the ſoul may hearken to the enemy, and not to the Lord; may walk after the fleſh, and not after the Spirit; may luſt after high knowledge, and hidden things of the kingdom, as they of old did after prying into the ark; may draw back from the Lord in thoſe reſpects wherein it had given up unto him, &c. Now theſe, and ſuch-like, are breaches of the covenant; or at leaſt ſuch ſins againſt it, as draw down judgments upon the ſoul at preſent, and at laſt utter caſting off, unleſs the ſoul be brought back by the judgments into the agreement again with the Lord in truth and uprightneſs. It is true, the Lord doth all in the covenant according to his good pleaſure; but withal, he hath appointed a way of his working out the life and happineſs of the ſoul, to which it is his good pleaſure to keep. And his way is Chriſt, his ſeed. Hence all the love, mercy, care, and tenderneſs of God flows. Hither is the ſoul to come for it; and here the ſoul is to abide, that it may enjoy and poſſeſs it. But if the enemy can by any means draw the ſoul out from hence, he draws it from its life and ſtrength, and from the ſweet bleſſings and influences of the holy and free covenant. Now the Lord hath not given power to the enemy to force from hence; but he gives power

to

to the ſoul to abide with him here; and in the hour of diſtreſs, if they cry to him, he helps the helpleſs, and lifts up a ſtandard againſt the enemy.

Now all that deſire the ſweetneſs of this covenant, the life, the virtue, the bleſſings of it, oh! wait to feel and receive ſomewhat from God, and in that to fear before him, and walk worthy of him, and not to grieve or provoke his Spirit. For he hath the power of life and death in his hand, and whom he will he may have ſufficient cauſe againſt, to turn from and cut off when he pleaſeth; and whom he will he may extend mercy to, as far and as long as he pleaſeth; for it is his own, and he may do what he will with it. Only know this, God is love; God is bowels, infinite bowels; yea, his tenderneſs is beyond imagination or comprehenſion, and he hates putting away. The poor mourning ſouls that cry unto him, feeling their need of him, and gaſping after him, he cannot caſt off; no, nor any that come unto him in the truth of their hearts: but the wiſe, the confident, the conceited, from their apprehenſions of ſcriptures, that think themſelves ſafe by virtue of the covenant, and yet are enemies in their minds to the light of the covenant, theſe are out of the thing at preſent (in their own imaginings and conceivings), and are in the moſt danger of any I know. The Lord in mercy cauſe his light to ſhine, his life to ariſe, his power to be manifeſt, and thereby lead into, and preſerve in, his everlaſting covenant, according to his good pleaſure. Amen.

A QUESTION

A QUESTION or Two, relating to ELECTION, anſwered.

Queſt. 1. *HOW may a man make his calling and election ſure?*

Anſ. By making Chriſt ſure to him, in whom the calling and election is; for the Lord chuſeth only in him, and refuſeth or reprobateth only out of him.

Queſt. 2. *How may I make Chriſt ſure to me?*

Anſ. By receiving him, giving up to him, parting with all for him, and waiting upon him in the way and path of life, till I feel the power of that broken in me, which would ſeparate from him. For what danger is there then, when the ſoul is naturally become the Lord's, rooted in his love, circumciſed in heart to love the Lord above all, even with the whole heart and ſoul? Certainly the love of the Lord cannot but flow in great ſtrength to that ſoul, and what can come between? But now, while there is ſomewhat ungiven up, ſomewhat yet ſtanding, in which the enemy hath a part, and by which he may enter, the ſtate of that ſoul is not fully ſure; but there may be a going back from the ſaving life into that wherein is the perdition and deſtruction of the ſoul; and whoever goes thither, meets with perdition and deſtruction, ſo far as he travels that way. For in the path of death there is death, which is met with by all that enter into, and walk therein; as in the path of life there is life. God is no reſpecter of perſons; but he is a reſpecter of his ſeed, and of his eternal covenant of life, which ſtands firm in his ſeed for ever. Here is life for every ſoul that feels the drawings of the Father, and comes to his Son for life, and abides in him; and there is death for every ſoul that comes not to this, and departs from this through the heart of unbelief. So the way of God is eternal and immutable;

mutable; he cannot deny himſelf. He that believeth in the Son, hath life; he that believeth not, is in the death and condemnation which belongs to the unbelief. Now wouldſt thou know thy election, wait to know and diſtinguiſh between Jacob and Eſau, Iſaac and Iſhmael, in thyſelf; for they were outward figures, and allegories of ſomewhat inward. Feel Eſau, the profane one; Iſhmael, the ſcoffer at the wiſdom, way, and ſeed of God: feel, I ſay, theſe (that are caſt off by God) caſt out of thee; and then feel Iſaac, the ſeed of the promiſe; Jacob, the plain birth of life, raiſed up in thee, living in thee, and thou in it. And then thou feeleſt the election, and art in the election. And as his ſeed is ſure to thee, and thy union with it, and ſtanding and abiding in it ſure, ſo thy election is ſure. Election is a deep myſtery, and none can read the ſcriptures about it (which indeed are hard to be underſtood, but eaſy to be wreſted) but they that underſtand the thing; that can read in the ſeed, life, power, and openings of the Spirit of the Lord, they read things as they are; but other men only read things as they apprehend and conceive them to be. So that the knowledge that God hath given his people is above all the knowledge that can be ſearched out, gathered, or comprehended by all the men upon the earth; whereby they know God better, the things of God better, the words and ſcriptures of truth better, than they themſelves otherwiſe (or any elſe) could poſſibly attain to.

A QUESTION anſwered concerning the Ground of Mens miſunderſtanding and wreſting of Scriptures.

Queſt. *WHAT is the ground of mens miſunderſtanding and wreſting of ſcriptures?*

Anſ. 1. Want of acquaintance with God's Spirit, and the right way of waiting upon him to receive the underſtanding of them. For though men may go thus far, as to know and confeſs that the Spirit of the Lord is the only revealer of the things of God, and the alone right interpreter of his own words; yet that man, who thus confeſſeth, may not certainly and diſtinctly know the Spirit of the Lord, and when he receiveth the interpretation of a ſcripture from him, or when from his underſtanding, or a ſpirit that is contrary to him. For there is another ſpirit near man, whoſe nature, work, and delight is to cauſe man to miſunderſtand, and miſwalk by the very ſcriptures; and will bring things as warmly, and (as it were) clearly to him, as he can from ſcriptures, purpoſely to deceive and miſlead him. Now he that hugs and receives every thing that thus riſeth in him, eaſily runs into, and is ſurely caught in the ſnare of the enemy. Therefore a man muſt watch, and wait, and fear, and pray that he may diſtinguiſh between the nature and voices of ſpirits in himſelf, that ſo he may know (in the light of the Lord) when the Lord ſpeaks, and alſo when the myſterious ſpirit of deceit ſtrives to ſpeak like the Lord. Now man cannot know this of himſelf, but as he is taught by the Lord, at the very time when the ſnare comes; and he muſt not determine haſtily, but wait to feel that wherein the Lord appears and ſpeaks to him, and wherein the enemy cannot ſpeak. Thus feeling the birth of life in his heart, the ſeed which is of the Father, which hath an

ear that knows the voice of the Shepherd, and ſinking into this, and liſtening in this (out of his own thoughts, reaſonings, and whole courſe of his own wiſdom); he alſo hath his ear opened to hear the true voice, and findeth ability here to diſtinguiſh it from the voice of the ſtranger, let him counterfeit ever ſo deceitfully. For the eye of the Lord, the eye of truth, the eye of life, the eye of the Spirit, pierceth through, and diſcovereth all deceits to the ſoul that feareth before him, diligently waiteth upon him in his ſeed, and deſireth to walk faithfully therein.

2. Want of acquaintance with God's truth in the love, life, and power of it. For he that knows truth, that hath received from God the thing the ſcriptures ſpeak of, how eaſy is it to him to underſtand the words that ſpeak of that thing? But he who hath the knowledge of the thing but from the words, how eaſy is it for him to miſunderſtand the words? As for inſtance: he whom God hath juſtified, he who hath received the righteouſneſs of the Son, he who daily feeleth the blood of ſprinkling, &c. how eaſy and natural is it unto him to underſtand the words of ſcripture, which ſpeak of theſe things? But he that hath not received this, nor thus knoweth the thing, how eaſy is it for him to miſunderſtand the words; and ſo, from miſunderſtanding of the words, to ſet up another righteouſneſs for the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, than that which the Spirit of God intendeth in the ſcriptures?

3. The opinions, apprehenſions, ways, and practices of men, which they have taken up in the dark, and in which their minds are engaged, are a great lett in their way from the right underſtanding of ſcriptures, or the teſtimony of truth from others according to the ſcriptures. For there hath been a cloudy and dark day, or a great night of darkneſs upon the earth, wherein the light (which leadeth to the ſoul's reſt) hath not ſhined clearly in mens ſpirits; and ſo in this cloudy darkneſs men have wandered from mountain to hill, ſeeking their reſting-place. Now ſome have fixed and pitched on one mountain, ſome on another; ſome

ſome on one hill, ſome on another, ſaying, here is the reſting-place. So when the Spirit of the Lord comes and cries, *Depart ye, depart ye; this is not your reſting-place, for it is polluted*; they cannot hear. Why ſo? Becauſe they have already believed otherwiſe, and in that belief took it up for their reſt; and ſo cannot rightly underſtand or believe thoſe ſcriptures, or thoſe living teſtimonies from the Spirit of the Lord, which declare it not to be ſo; but are ready to wreſt the one, and reproach the other.

Some QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, and QUERIES, concerning DECEIT and DECEIVERS; as what they are, what diſcovers them, how Man may come out of them, and be preſerved from them, *&c.*

IN the truth there is no deceit; and they that are in the truth, are out of the deceit; and abiding there, are out of the reach of deceivers: but they that are out of the truth, are in the deceit already, and are liable daily more and more both to be further deceived, and to help to deceive others.

Queſt. 1. *What is deceit, and who are deceivers?*

Anſ. That which appeareth like truth, but is not; that is deceit: and they which are in a form of godlineſs, but are without the Spirit, life, and power of it, they are deceivers.

Queſt. 2. *Who are moſt liable to deceit?*

Anſ. The ſimple, the heedleſs, the careleſs, the credulous; thoſe that wait not upon the Lord in the light, power, and demonſtration of his Spirit, to try things; theſe (with good words and fair ſpeeches, and appearances of things) are eaſily led aſide from the truth itſelf into ſome likeneſs or reſemblance of it.

Queſt. 3. *Which is the time of deceit?*

Anſ. The night; the cloudy, the dark time, when the enemy hath raiſed his fogs and miſts in the minds of men, then is his time of deceiving their hearts.

Queſt. 4. *Is it now night or day?*

Anſ. It is night with ſome, day with others. Where the light is ariſen, there it is day; where the darkneſs covereth and poſſeſſeth the minds of men, there it is night.

Queſt. 5. *How may a man know whether it be night or day with him?*

Anſ. By waiting to feel ſomewhat of the life of God ariſing in him, by turning and hearkening to his witneſs. That will faithfully diſcover how it is with him, and where he is.

Queſt. 6. *How may a man come out of the darkneſs of the night into the light and brightneſs of the day?*

Anſ. By joining to the firſt glimmerings and breakings forth thereof upon him. The leaſt light of truth hath the ſame nature, virtue, and properties with the greateſt. Though not the ſame in degree, yet the ſame in kind; and he that will come to the greateſt, muſt begin with the leaſt. Light makes manifeſt; the day diſcovers both the things of the night and of the day. Haſt thou any diſcovery of either kind? Either of that which is good, or of that which is evil? Either of that which is of the worldly nature and the evil one, or of that which is of the heavenly nature and the Holy One? Join in immediately in the virtue, ſtrength, and power of that which makes the diſcovery, and thy ſpirit therein will find an entrance into the light of the day; and going on faithfully thus, it will daily more and more break in upon thee, even until it hath gathered thy ſpirit out of the blackneſs, darkneſs, and deceit of the night, into the beauty, brightneſs, and truth of the day.

Queſt. 7. *How may a man be preſerved from deceit and deceivers?*

Anſ. By abiding in that which diſcovers them to him, and preſerveth out of them; by dwelling in that light, in that life, in that power, in that truth, into which

which they cannot enter: by keeping to, and in, the elect of God, which never was deceived, nor can be deceived: for it is of God, it is his seed, of his nature, in which the wicked one (the deceiver) finds nothing, hath nothing in him to enter at; and he that abides in him, is safe in him. But he that goes forth out of the life, out of the light, out of the seed, out of the power which preserves, out of the holy anointing, which keeps the eye open, he easily runs into, and is entangled in the deceivableness of unrighteousness, judging it (for want of a true discerning) righteousness; and then having judged that to be righteousness, which is in its own nature but unrighteousness, he must needs also judge that which is the true righteousness to be but unrighteousness; and then (having passed this judgment in himself) he grows wise, confident, and strong in his deceit, both believing himself, and also endeavouring to convince and persuade others, that it is the truth. Oh! who knoweth the security of the little ones of God, who have a being and standing in his truth! The arm of his power is stretched round about them, and he is a defence and strength unto them against all that would break in upon them (to make a prey of their life, or to shake their standing in his truth), either inwardly or outwardly. Oh! bless his name, sing high praises to him, ye that feel it, over all deceit or deceivables, over all the devices of the dark spirit, which entangleth others, and would also entangle you, but that his goodness, mercy, tender love, and powerful arm is stretched out over you. So to him be the praise, and the bowings of that soul, which feels his powerful and merciful preservation, for ever and ever.

Now it is in my heart to add four queries, which, rightly weighed and resolved, in and according to truth, may further open mens minds into the true sense and right understanding of this thing.

Query 1. *Have not the last days, the perilous times* (the times foretold of by Christ and his apostles) *been a long while upon the earth, wherein iniquity hath abounded,*

and the love of many waxed cold, wherein men have been lovers of themſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, &c. ? *Hath there not been a long night of darkneſs, wherein theſe things (with many other fruits and effects of the night) have hid and covered themſelves almoſt in all ſorts of profeſſors of Chriſtianity, under a form of godlineſs?*

Query 2. *Is not their time expiring already, and in ſome degree expired? Was it not to have an end when the light and power of truth, which at firſt kept it back, did ſpring and riſe again?*

Query 3. *Is not the day ariſen? Is not the darkneſs already paſt? And doth not the true light now ſhine (and the true power of life now appear) in many veſſels?* Let the ſouls, that deſire to know the truth of this, wait to feel that which is of God anſwer in them.

Query 4. *Where are the deceivers, and where is the deceit? Is it among thoſe that have embraced the light of life? or among thoſe who abide in their old darkneſs, and whoſe eyes are not yet opened to ſee the light and beauty of the day, which is ariſen in the hearts of thoſe that are quickened and raiſed by the power of the Lord?*

That the Way of LIFE and SALVATION is freely held forth by GOD to all; and there is nothing in him to let, ſtop, or diſcourage any Man from receiving his TRUTH, and giving up to him in the Faith and Obedience of it, but very much to invite and encourage.

IT hath pleaſed the Lord, who is over all, and good unto all, to provide a remedy for the ſin and tranſgreſſion of the creature. For as ſin hath abounded unto death, ſo he hath cauſed righteouſneſs to abound unto life; yea, the free gift, which is as large and univerſal as ever ſin was, hath more power in it to ſave, than ſin hath to deſtroy. And there is no ground

ground of discouragement for any (who hath not outsinned the day of his visitation, and so the offer of mercy is over as to him) in reference to God; though the enemy of the soul strives to raise up many discouragements and objections in the minds of many, to keep them from hoping in the Lord, and from giving up to his truth, which saveth all that receive it, and abide in it. Now it is in my heart at this time, from a true sense, to signify somewhat concerning the nature of the Lord (and his real desire to save even those that perish), which may conduce towards the removing of objections and letts of this nature out of the minds of men.

1. God is sweetness, meekness, gentleness, tenderness, abounding in mercy and loving-kindness, pitying the miserable, and naturally holding forth an helping hand towards them: yea, he is universally thus. There is not one miserable soul, not one perishing creature upon the face of the earth, but as he hath wisdom and power to help it, so he hath tender bowels, and an heart thereunto. And it is not for want of somewhat to be done on his part, that souls perish, but the failing always was, and still is, on the creature's part.

2. God loveth all his creatures, and cannot but be good to them. He is outwardly good, he is inwardly good to them all. He can do nothing against any one of them, but what stands with his love and mercy. He doth not forget himself; he doth not lose his nature in the manifesting of his righteousness, wrath, and severity against sin and sinners.

3. He desires not the death of a sinner, nay, not of the wicked. How mercifully did he walk with the Jews in the first covenant? Did he ever desire their miscarriages, and the miseries which came upon them thereby? Nay, did he not desire their good, and their obedient walking with him therein for their good? "O! (said he) that there were such an heart in them, "that they would fear me, and keep my command-"ments always, that it might be well with them," &c. Deut. v. 29. How mercifully doth he walk with

all in the second covenant, that are in any measure drawn within the limits and compass thereof! He is a Saviour, that is his nature; and he seeketh the salvation of his creatures with his whole heart, and with all his soul. And when he bringeth any to repentance, there is joy in his bosom: and when the enemy breaketh in upon any of his, or by any subtilty draweth them into that which destroyeth, his pure tender Spirit is grieved therewith, and mourneth because of it. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," (said his true living image with tears) "how often would I have gathered "thee!"

4. He would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. God sends his truth, his powerful truth, to save; and he shuts not any one out of it; but seeks (in the way he hath appointed) to gather all into it, that they might be saved by it.

5. He is very patient and long-suffering, waits long, tries long, invites often, touches often, draws often; yea, the very vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, there is much patience and long-suffering exercised towards them, before the Lord can cast them off, and give them up utterly to destruction. For mark, destruction is not his work or delight; it is the work of a spirit and nature contrary to his. "I came not," (saith Christ) "to destroy mens lives, but to save;" to give life to them. And this is the proper end of God in every administration: his end is not death, destruction, increasing of the condemnation of the creature, &c. but to bring it to life thereby, out of that which leadeth into the condemnation and destruction. Did he not for this end bear with the old world? Was not this the end of Noah's preaching to them, and warning of them? Did he not for this end bear with the Jews in Egypt, in the wilderness, in Canaan, &c.? Is not this the proper intent of the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God, that it should lead to repentance? (Rom. ii. 4.) and repentance leads to mercy, remission, and life.

6. The

6. The ſacrifice of Chriſt had relation to all men. He was ſent out of God's univerſal love to mankind, to the whole world; and was made a propitiation by God for the ſins of the whole world.

7. There is no man periſheth for want of power; for there is power in the free gift which comes upon all. There is power in it to quicken, to give faith, to preſerve in the faith, to do all that is to be done in the ſoul; and it doth all every-where, as it findeth place and entertainment in the ſoul. But man refuſeth, man loveth the darkneſs, hateth the light, ſhutteth his eyes againſt it, withdraweth his heart from it, and ſo beateth back the purpoſe and counſel of God's love and good-will towards him. For as the Jews outwardly, in that outward covenant, almoſt always rebelled, reſiſted, and brought wrath upon themſelves, to the grief of God's heart and of his holy prophets; ſo do men in reference to the inward covenant (in that nature and ſpirit) exceedingly provoking the Lord, until his Spirit (in its holy jealouſy and indignation) turn from them, and give them up to hardneſs, ſenſeleſſneſs, and impenitency, which ſealeth up to deſtruction. But as Iſrael, in that firſt covenant, could never juſtly lay the cauſe of their deſtruction on God, but God did moſt juſtly lay it on them (" O Iſrael! thy deſtruction is of thyſelf, but " in me is thy help);" ſo neither can any blame the Lord, who periſh from, and fall ſhort of, the virtue of the ſecond covenant: for he faileth not in doing his part therein, no more than he did fail in the firſt. But man turneth from the power which ſaves, from the light which makes manifeſt, from the light which quickens; and this is his condemnation, and the cauſe of his periſhing: ſo that God will be juſt and clear of the blood of all men, and the blood of them that periſh will lie upon their own heads. Had there not been ſomewhat near every man, which had more power in it than ſin had, they might have had ſome plea before the Lord; but the preſence of this, the power of this, the working of this in every heart,

more

more or leſs, leaves all men without excuſe, and clears the free-giver and his free gift in the balance of righteouſneſs. For this gift of his is faithful to every man upon the face of the earth, never conſenting to his iniquities and tranſgreſſions in any kind, but ſtill teſtifying againſt them as the Lord pleaſeth to open its mouth. But who hath believed its report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Yet greater will the condemnation be upon them, upon whom the Lord hath more abundantly ſhined; and many will have a plea in reſpect of them, which the Lord will hear and conſider, and ſo they ſhall not enter into that depth of judgment and condemnation, which will light on ſuch as have reſiſted the light and power of life, in its more glorious and bright appearances and ſtrivings with them; even as Chriſt ſaid, "It ſhall be eaſier for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and "Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for Cho-"razin and Bethſaida, Capernaum and Jeruſalem."

Therefore, O all men upon the earth, know the day of your viſitation! Make peace with the Lord, O tranſgreſſors! lay hold on his ſtrength, that ye may make peace with him. Believe not the liar, who would put you out of hope, but believe the voice of his love and tender Spirit. Turn in, liſten after him, watch if he do not call, mind if he do not draw; and do not ſay, I want power; but wait in humility, meekneſs and fear, until his power ariſe. Bear his judgments, wait upon him in the way of his judgments. Do not fly from him becauſe thereof; for therein is the mercy, life and ſalvation. Be not haſty, but wait long, believe long, hope long, feel the patience of the Lamb, learn the myſterious path of life from the inward teacher, that ye may certainly know it, and find your feet guided by his Spirit into it.

Is not the voice gone forth from him that is true? "Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, "&c. and whoſoever will, let him take the water of life "freely." And is not he near who cauſeth the thirſt, and giveth the will? Whom hath the Lord excluded? Why

Why ſhould any man exclude himſelf? The call is univerſal, the way is ſet open to all. That is at hand which hath life and power in it, and is ready to work in all. This commandment hath it received of its Father; and it is faithful which hath received it: and all that come to the Father here, in this gathering of life, the Father is ready to receive. Thy ſoul, O man! is the Lord's. It is very precious in his eye: he ſeeks to ſave it, and hath ſent ſomewhat into thy heart to gather thee from that which would deſtroy it. And this which he hath ſent, hath in it of the Father's love, of the Father's mercy, of the Father's power, of the Father's light, of the Father's life, of the Father's wiſdom, righteouſneſs, &c. and will gather thee out of the world into the Father's nature and Spirit, if thou wilt hearken to him with the ear which he will create in thee, and receive him with the heart which he will give thee: yea, he will help thee to turn from and forſake thy own wickedneſs, and the wicked ſpirit, and to turn towards him who is life, righteouſneſs, and peace to the ſoul that is gathered unto him; do but give up thyſelf (in the faith and obedience which he is creating in thee) in the way of his quickening and renewing life.

Some QUESTIONS anſwered concerning the SPIRIT of CHRIST, and the Spirit of the SCRIBES and PHARISEES.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT kind of ſpirit was the ſpirit of the Scribes and Phariſees?*

Anſ. A ſtrict, zealous, righteous ſpirit, according to their underſtanding and apprehenſions of the letter. They faſted much, they prayed much, they gave alms, they were great contenders for the circumciſion and ordinances of Moſes.

Queſt.

Queſt. 2. *What kind of ſpirit was the Spirit of Chriſt?*

Anſ. A righteous, ſtrict, and zealous Spirit, according to the power of the endleſs life. He was in that from which the righteouſneſs of the law came, and which brought it forth and fulfilled it in his veſſel.

Queſt. 3. *What did the Scribes and Phariſees judge of Chriſt according to their apprehenſions and underſtanding of the letter?*

Anſ. They judged him a ſinner and tranſgreſſor of the law of Moſes, a looſe perſon, an eater, a drinker, a friend of publicans and ſinners; one who taught not his diſciples to faſt and pray, but rather to break the law of God, and tranſgreſs the ſabbath; yea, one who was a blaſphemer, and a deceiver of people, &c.

Queſt. 4. *How came the Scribes and Phariſees thus to judge of Chriſt?*

Anſ. Becauſe they were in that ſpirit, nature and mind, which giveth wrong judgment. For it is not a gathered knowledge from the letter, which makes able to judge of ſpirits, and about the things of God; but a receiving and being born of the Spirit. For from the Spirit alone is the right underſtanding of the letter, which the Spirit hath to give, and giveth to the true birth.

Queſt. 5. *What did Chriſt judge of the Scribes and Phariſees according to his knowledge of them from the Spirit and power of life?*

Anſ. That they were hypocrites, painted walls, and ſepulchres, which made a fair ſhew in the fleſh, but were not of nor in the truth.

Queſt. 6. *Is the ſpirit of the Scribes and Phariſees to be found now in the world?*

Anſ. There is nothing new under the ſun. The ſpirit of wickedneſs and deceit is always the ſame, in all ages and generations; and the Spirit of holineſs and truth is the ſame alſo. So that Cain, Iſhmael, Eſau, the ſcoffer and perſecuter of the prophets (of Chriſt's apoſtles and holy martyrs) are to be found in every age (the ſame in Spirit and nature with them): and ſo are Abel, Enoch, Iſaac, Jacob, &c.

Queſt.

Queſt. 7. *Where is the ſpirit of the Scribes and Phariſees now to be found?*

Anſ. They in all profeſſions (gatherings and walkings) that are ſtrict, zealous, and righteous, according to their own underſtandings and apprehenſions of the letter, and not according to the Spirit and power of the endleſs life, they are of and in that ſpirit.

Queſt. 8. *How may a man come out of the ſpirit of the Scribes and Phariſees, and into the Spirit of Chriſt?*

Anſ. By coming to the power of the endleſs life wherein Chriſt's miniſtry is, wherein his Spirit is felt and miniſtereth. This ſhuts out all the deceits and devices of that ſpirit which lieth in wait to deceive. He may entangle the mind about the letter, about the underſtanding of ſcriptures, and practices and ordinances there: but he that begins in the Spirit (in the power of life, in the living demonſtration of truth) is out of his compaſs; and there abiding, groweth up and remaineth out of his reach.

Queſt. 9. *How may a man come to the power of the endleſs life?*

Anſ. By waiting to feel it. There is ſomewhat of God near every man; which, his ſpirit retiring and waiting on the Lord, the Lord will give him to feel in the ſeaſons of his good pleaſure. For it is near man, not as a talent always to lie dead and buried, but to work in him, and bring him out of his own ſinful corrupt nature into its holy pure nature.

Queſt. 10. *How may a man feel and know the power of this life?*

Anſ. By its nature, properties, manner, and end of working in the heart. It enlightens the ſoul, it quickens to God, it draws the heart from that which is manifeſtly and ſenſibly evil without diſpute, it opens the eye to ſee and diſcern that which is holy and good, inflaming the mind with deſires after it. Now this is the appearance of the Holy One, who thus appears and begins to work, to draw the mind from that which is ſinful and deſtroyeth, to that which is holy and ſaveth. Happy, oh! happy is he who thus feels the drawing,

drawing, quickening Spirit, and in faithfulneſs gives up thereto! for he (by the Spirit and power of life) ſhall feel Cain, the ſacrificer according to the fleſh, Iſhmael the ſeed of Abraham after the fleſh, Eſau the firſt birth, whoſe mind is in the earth: he ſhall feel theſe, I ſay, caſt out; and Abel the righteous ſeed, who lives and ſacrifices in the true faith; Iſaac the ſeed of promiſe, Jacob the wreſtler with God, in the power and ſtrength of his own Spirit, with the tears and ſupplications which are from his own life; he ſhall feel (I ſay) this nature, birth, and Spirit raiſed in him, and his ſoul in it living to God, and increaſing in union and fellowſhip with him.

Some QUESTIONS anſwered concerning BLASPHEMY and BLASPHEMERS.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is blaſphemy?*

Anſ. It is the reproaching or ſpeaking ill of the truths or name of God, in any of their appearances, or of them whom he hath choſen to bear his name, or hold forth his truth. To reproach the name or truths of God, as they have been held forth in former ages, or as they are held forth in this age; or to ſpeak evil of the inſtrument he then choſe, or now chuſeth and maketh uſe of to hold them forth; this is blaſphemy: and the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs who ſo doth, whatſoever he be.

Queſt. 2. *In which reſpect are men moſt liable to blaſphemy? Are they apteſt to reproach and ſpeak evil of God's truths, as they have been held forth in former ages, and the inſtruments by which God then held them forth? or are they apter to reproach and ſpeak evil of the truths of God, as they are held forth in their age, and the inſtruments and miniſters who then held them forth?*

Anſ. Men are not ſo liable to blaſpheme the truths (or name) of God, as formerly held forth, or the meſ-

meſſengers and miniſters of former ages, as the preſent truth and the preſent miniſtry.

Queſt. 3. *How cometh that about, or why is it ſo?*

Anſ. Becauſe the truths of former ages, and the miniſtry therein, have wrought through the deceit and oppoſition, which withſtood them in their day, and have left a good ſavour behind them; ſo that it would be hard and diſadvantageous to the evil ſpirit to endeavour to bring a reproach over them. If men ſhould go about to revile Moſes or the prophets of old, Chriſt or his apoſtles, who would give an ear to them? Surely very few, if any. But to cry up theſe and their doctrine, and to endeavout to make the preſent diſpenſation of truth appear to men, as if it were different from, and contrary to, theſe (of another nature, of another ſpirit, tending to other ends, and towards the producing of other effects); this is a very ſubtil device, and an advantageous way of oppoſing the preſent truth and miniſtry with; and this way the enemy hath taken all along. Moſes, in his day, had enemies and reſiſters, but after his death we never hear him ſpoken againſt; but thoſe that withſtood the prophets in after-ages, would honour the remembrance of Moſes. In Chriſt's day they would honour both Moſes and the prophets; but Chriſt, and his diſciples and apoſtles, were reproached as blaſphemers and deceivers. After that age, Chriſt and his apoſtles were generally acknowledged, as well as Moſes and the prophets; but yet they that were in the ſame Spirit, in the ſame life, in the ſame nature, have afterwards ſtill been perſecuted and oppoſed by the preſent age.

Queſt. 4. *Who are the great blaſphemers in every age?*

Anſ. They which profeſs truth, but are not in the power and life of that which they profeſs; and among theſe, thoſe eſpecially who have had any taſte of the power: for if theſe turn from the power, which it pleaſed God to give them ſome taſte of, they are given up by God to deluſion, deviliſhneſs, ſubtilty, and enmity, above all others. For as the blaſphemy (which

(which I am ſpeaking of) is above truth and the name of Chriſt, ſo it is chiefly to be found among thoſe who pretend to his name. Thoſe that have the outward name, knowledge, and talk about the name, about Chriſt, about the heavenly things; theſe blaſpheme and reproach thoſe who have and are in the thing itſelf, who dwell in heaven, and worſhip in the heavenly place, even in the true tabernacle which God hath pitched, and not man. Theſe bring their knowledge, wiſdom, ſcriptures, experiences, obſervations, and all that ever they can reap and rend, againſt the preſent power and life of truth.

Queſt. 5. *How come men, who pretend to truth, and to ſeek after it, to run into this grievous and dangerous blaſphemy?*

Anſ. By reaſon of their not being in that, which demonſtrateth the truth in the holy power and nature thereof. They want its light and demonſtration, and ſo underſtand things out of it; and in this their own miſunderſtanding turn againſt that which ſhould enlighten, ſanctify, and preſerve them. Now, not being in that (but in another thing); not being in the true Spirit, in the true light, in the true knowledge, in the true ſenſe and underſtanding, they muſt needs err and misjudge; and the greater their knowledge, ability, wiſdom, and zeal is, the more deſperate and dangerous is their path of error, both to themſelves and others. Who erred ſo dangerouſly in that day, as the Scribes and Phariſees; which by their wiſdom, knowledge, and ſkill in the ſcriptures, would diſpute againſt Chriſt, prove he was not (he could not be) the Meſſiah, according to the ſcriptures (bidding men ſearch the ſcriptures, and ſee if any prophet came out of Galilee, John vii. 52.) judged him, who was indeed the holy one (who loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity) an unholy one, a ſinner and companion of ſinners, a blaſphemer, deceiver, &c.? And in the ſame ſpirit, the ſtricter a man is, and the more he knows, and the more confident he is of his knowledge and ſkill in the ſcriptures, the more deſperately and

and dangerously will he venture to oppose the appearance of the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus in this day.

Quest. 6. *How come they who have so much literal knowledge of scriptures, and have had a true sense and experience (some of them) of the things of God, to be out of that which demonstrateth the truth?*

Ans. By their turning from it, and rejecting it. The Scribes and Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves. There is but one thing can open the eyes, and the Scribes and Pharisees turned against it, believing that their eyes were opened already, by the light and knowledge which they had received from Moses. "Moses, said they, we know God speaks "to; but as for this fellow, we know not from whence "he is. And just so is it now. Oh! that ye could "read, whose state it is!

Quest. 7. *Why do they turn from it and reject it?*

Ans. Because it answers not their expectations. That appearance of Christ in flesh in that day, did not answer the expectations of the Scribes and Pharisees. And this appearance of Christ in his Holy Spirit and power after the apostasy, doth not answer the expectations of many now. And so, not appearing as what they look for, as what they have expected, according to their apprehensions and understanding of the scriptures, they cannot (so standing and believing) wait, but turn from it, and turn the scriptures against it, as the Scribes and Pharisees turned the scriptures against that appearance of Christ.

Now, Oh! that men, that have any desires after truth, might not run into this kind of blasphemy, and so thereby provoke and turn that Spirit and power of life against them, which alone is able to save them. For the Spirit and power of the Lord turneth against the other spirit, in all its devices and transformings, and against them who are joined to that spirit. And as the eye of the Lord is chiefly upon his present ministration of truth in the present age to mind that, to bless that, to appear in that; so his Spirit most

turneth againſt that which oppoſeth and ſeeketh to overturn it. Yea, little do men know what they have loſt from God, as to themſelves and their own ſtates; and what they are become in his ſight, by oppoſing the preſent diſpenſation and miniſtration of truth; even as little do many know in this day, as the Scribes and Phariſees did, in their day, what they brought upon themſelves and others, whom they infected (by their falſe knowledge and wrong expounding and managing of the ſcriptures) with a prejudiced ſpirit againſt Chriſt.

The Lord did promiſe that he would become the Shepherd, and gather his ſheep himſelf, after the cloudy and dark day. He is come to ſeek out, to gather, to heal, to bind up, to comfort, to preſerve, &c. He is known, he is witneſſed, he is received; his life, virtue, healing and ſaving power is felt. Let men reproach and revile it ever ſo much, yet it is known to be the thing, the pearl, the ſeed of the kingdom, &c. Yea, and he that receiveth it, and is born of it, knoweth that he is of God, and hath the true nature of life, and true language from God; which that, which knoweth God, heareth; but that which is not of God, cannot hear.

A QUESTION concerning MIRACLES anſwered.

Queſt. *IF this be a new diſpenſation of the life and power of God, even of the preaching of the everlaſting goſpel again after the apoſtaſy, why is it not accompanied with outward miracles now, as formerly it was? I ſay* outward *miracles, becauſe it* is *accompanied with inward miracles. For the lame (that could never ſet ſtep in the path of life) do now walk; the eyes that were blind, are opened, and do now ſee; the ears that were deaf, have been unſtopped, and do now hear; the lepers inwardly*

inwardly (who were all overſpread with ſin and corruption) have been waſhed, cleanſed, and healed, by the pure power; yea, the dead inwardly have been quickened, raiſed, turned to him that lives for evermore, have received life from him, and do live in him and with him. Now theſe are mighty things, wonderful miracles, even the ſubſtance of the miracles which were wrought under the law, and which Chriſt himſelf wrought outwardly. For it was not the outward healing, which is ſalvation, life, and power chiefly aimed at therein; but to point men by that to the thing which was to work the inward; that they might take notice of it, know it, come to it, and wait upon it, to be made partakers of the inward health and ſalvation by it. Yet ſeeing in that day Chriſt did then pleaſe to put forth his power outwardly, to point to, and witneſs of, the inward, why doth he not do ſo now?

Anſ. The nature of the preſent diſpenſation doth not require it. For the preſent diſpenſation of life, is to bring men to the principle of life which is within them (which is the ſum and ſubſtance of all former diſpenſations); and to bring them to this, there doth not need any thing of a miraculous nature outwardly; but the witneſs, demonſtration and enlightening of the Spirit inwardly. Now when the outward law was to be received, then the Lord ſaw need of outward miracles to confirm it; ſo alſo in the prophets days, while that diſpenſation held, till towards the coming of Chriſt. And when Chriſt came, in the body prepared by the Father, it pleaſed the Lord to confirm (by outward viſible demonſtrations of his power in him) that this was he. Likewiſe afterwards, the apoſtles having the doctrine concerning that appearance to preach and teſtify to the world, the Lord was alſo pleaſed and ſaw good to confirm it by miracles. But now there is not any new doctrine to be preached. The doctrine concerning Chriſt is the ſame that it was, the very ſame that the apoſtles preached. Neither is there any need of confirming it now; for it is generally believed among profeſſors of all ſorts; as Chriſt's birth, preaching, living holily, dying (offering himſelf

ſelf up as a ſacrifice for ſin), riſing, aſcending, ſitting at the right hand of the Father, who doubts of theſe things? But under all this knowledge men hide their ſins, their luſts, and corruptions, ſerving not the Lord (not truly fearing, believing in, and obeying him) but his enemies, and are become corrupt like unto the Heathen; being in words Chriſtians, but as to the holy converſation and power of the endleſs life, as far from it as the very Heathen. Therefore hath the Lord viſited the world in this ſtate, and ſent forth what he judged meet for it in this ſtate; to wit, not a miniſtry to preach over that doctrine, under which the Chriſtian world had corrupted themſelves; but to point to the principle of life, wherein is the light and power to diſcover, lead from and waſh away this corruption. And with this miniſtry there goeth a power, to reach the heart and raiſe the witneſs, in all that hear in fear, and in the ſenſe and dread of God; ſo that the witneſs preſently anſwers, and the mind is inwardly ſatisfied, knows the thing, and turns to it. Now this (and the effect of this) is beyond miracles, and the ſatisfaction or aſſurance which they can afford. For miracles leave a diſpute in the mind (notwithſtanding all the miracles Chriſt ſhewed, there was yet a diſpute and diſſatisfaction in the minds of many concerning him). But he that feels the thing itſelf in the true principle, where the demonſtration and certainty of the Spirit's aſſurance is received; he is paſt diſpute, and is gone a degree, in the nature of things, beyond that ſatisfaction which miracles can afford. He is out of that ſtate and mind which aſketh a ſign, or ſeeketh confirmation by a ſign. So that men ought to take heed how they expect or call for miracles now, as the Jews did to Chriſt for a ſign of old; for that is not the temper of mind which this diſpenſation is to anſwer, but rather to draw men out from thence into a principle, into the new life and Spirit itſelf; where fuller demonſtrations (of a deeper nature) are given to the ſoul, than outward miracles are. Feel the power that is revealed, feel the life

that

that is made manifeſt, let in the light of the day which ſhines; this will ſcatter the darkneſs from thee, and clear up the things of the day unto thee. The pure miniſtration of power, the pure miniſtration of life, the light of the everlaſting day is come. Oh! wait the opening of the eye that ſees it, and be conceived and brought forth in the womb of it.

Some further QUESTIONS anſwered concerning the NEW COVENANT.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT were thoſe days, after which the New Covenant was to be made?*

Anſ. They were the days of the law and prophets, the days of the firſt covenant, the days of God's exerciſing and making trial of that outward people the Jews, by his outward and literal covenant. After the full expiring of thoſe days, another covenant was to be made.

Queſt. 2. *What are the days wherein the New Covenant is made?*

Anſ. They are the days of Chriſt, the days of his power, the days of the miniſtration of his Spirit.

Queſt. 3. *What is the houſe of Iſrael and Judah, with which this New Covenant is to be made? Is it the Iſrael and Judah according to the fleſh? The Iſrael and Judah according to the old covenant, or according to the new?*

Anſ. When the old covenant is paſſed away, the conſideration of Iſrael and Judah (after the fleſh) paſſed away alſo; and the new covenant is fitted for, and made with, the new Iſrael and Judah; ſo that, as the apoſtle ſaid, "He is not" (now, according to this covenant) "a Jew, that is one outward; nor is "that circumciſion, which is outward in the fleſh; "but he is a Jew, which is one inward," &c. The goſpel breaks down the outward conſideration between

Jew and Gentile, and brings up another conſideration in both; ſo that the promiſes and bleſſings are not to either in their old ſtate, but as they are gathered into, and ſpring up in, the new ſeed.

Queſt. 4. *Is this covenant faultleſs? Doth it mend that which God found amiſs in the other? Doth it keep more firmly to him than the other did? Is there no falling away from it?*

Anſ. Yes, it is faultleſs, it doth help the defects of the other. It doth keep more firmly to God. There is no falling away from it, by thoſe with whom it is fully made, and who are eſtabliſhed in it. But in the paſſage and travel, there is danger to the ſoul which is not faithful and watchful, leſt it be drawn from that which gives it right to, and entrance into, the covenant. For as the beginning is in the faith, and in the obedience; ſo is the continuance, growth, and progreſs. Thus the goſpel was preached, "He that "believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved;" which believing includes not only a beginning to believe, but a going on therein, and continuing to the end. For ſo is the promiſe and word of Chriſt, "He that "continueth to the end ſhall be ſaved." But if any man draw back from the Lord, from his Spirit, and return into the way of death with the other ſpirit, the ſoul of the Lord will have no pleaſure in him.

Object. *But then this alſo is like the firſt covenant, depending upon the creature, and is defective as the other was.*

Anſ. No; this covenant doth not depend upon the creature: but upon God's love, mercy, and power, which hath no limits in this covenant, but may extend itſelf as far and as long as it pleaſeth. It dependeth upon the principle of his life, upon the power of his Spirit freely diſpenſed to the creature; yet the creature that will reap and enjoy this, muſt come to it in the faith and power which is of the principle, and in the ſame muſt abide with it. For God forceth none to come, but draweth and maketh willing; neither doth he force any to ſtay, but perſuadeth and maketh willing to ſtay. This is the manner of his working

in

in the day of his power. But now, if the ſoul hearken to the other ſpirit, and his drawings, and depart from the Lord, and will not hearken and be won again, the love and pleaſure of the Lord turns from it, even according to the law of this covenant. For there is a law of this covenant, according to the nature of it (according to which the Lord works) as well as there was in the other.

Now ſearch ye the ſcriptures concerning this thing. Is there any promiſe of ſalvation, but upon coming to the Son; or to them that come, without abiding? Did not Chriſt tell his own diſciples, that as they were in the vine, in his love, ſo they muſt abide there? It was the law his Father gave him, and the ſame law he giveth them. It is natural to man to backſlide; and in his backſliding from that wherein is the life and virtue, how can he but miſs of the life and virtue of it? Therefore, in this covenant, the Lord hath provided that which will heal the backſlidings, which will work out all in man freely, which will powerfully preſerve him, &c. But he muſt come to it (he muſt come to the Son, he muſt come to the waters) and he muſt alſo abide there. Yet this is not required of him to do of himſelf neither, according to the law and courſe of the old covenant; but of him in the new ability, which is in the new principle of life, wherein he is daily to receive it: yea, it is with him, and near him; as near him to be daily drawing him into, and preſerving him in life, and within the limits of the covenant, as the tempter is to be drawing him into ſinning againſt the covenant, and ſo into death.

Queſt. 5. *What doth God promiſe to do for the new houſe of Iſrael and Judah in this new covenant?*

Anſ. He promiſeth to put his laws into their mind, and to write them in their hearts. (Oh! happy he that knoweth theſe laws, this mind, this heart, this manner of writing!) He promiſeth to be their God, and that they ſhall be his people. (This covenant is a powerful covenant; it will make ſo indeed!) He promiſeth to become their teacher, and ſuch a teacher

as all ſhall know him, from the leaſt to the greateſt, even ſo as they ſhall not need to ſeek out abroad after the knowledge of him. (It is ſo where this covenant is made, even with the leaſt with whom it is completed; but it is not ſo where it is only begun, or in ſome few degrees carried on). He promiſeth to take away that which alone is able to hinder the good things of the covenant; for he will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and iniquities will he remember no more. This alſo is witneſſed according to the ſoul's growth in, and receiving into it the ſtrength of the covenant. For many find ſinning againſt the covenant, and the remembering of their iniquities in their paſſage; yea, judgment doth continue in the refining time, till that be made to paſs away thereby which the judgment is to; but in the covenant itſelf is reſt, joy, peace, ſatisfaction, life, and powerful redemption and righteouſneſs for evermore.

Queſt. 6. *How is this covenant made, and how doth the ſoul enter into it, grow up in it, and reap and enjoy the ſweet bleſſings and promiſes of it?*

Anſ. It is made in the faith and obedience of the ſoul to the goſpel, to the power of the endleſs life. It is made according to the promiſe. The promiſe is to him that believes and obeys the goſpel. There is no other way in it but union with Chriſt in the faith, from which flows obedience to the holy commands and requirings of his Spirit. All unbelief and diſobedience is out of this holy bleſſed covenant. They are ſtops in the way, and hinder the ſoul both from entering into, and from abiding in, the covenant; yea, the gates of hell may eaſily prevail againſt them who do not believe, obey, watch and pray, but enter into the temptations of the enemy, which draw into death, as the motions and requirings of the Spirit lead into life.

A Brief ACCOUNT concerning SILENT MEETINGS; the Nature, Uſe, Intent, and Benefit of them.

THIS is a great myſtery, hid from the eye of man, who is run from the inward life into outward obſervations. He cannot ſee either that this is required by the Lord of his people, or any edification therein, or benefit thereby; but to the mind that is drawn inward the thing is plain; and the building up hereby in the life of God, and fellowſhip one with another therein, is ſweetly felt; and precious refreſhment from the preſence of the Lord received by them, who ſingly herein wait upon him according to the leadings and requirings of his Holy Spirit. Now to open the thing a little to the upright-hearted, if the Lord pleaſe.

After the mind is in ſome meaſure turned to the Lord, his quickenings felt, his ſeed beginning to ariſe and ſpring up in the heart, then the fleſh is to be ſilent before him, and the ſoul to wait upon him (and for his further appearings) in that meaſure of life which is already revealed. Now this is a great thing to know fleſh ſilenced, to feel the reaſoning thoughts and diſcourſes of the fleſhly mind ſtilled, and the wiſdom, light, and guidance of God's Spirit waited for. For man is to come into the poverty of ſelf, into the abaſedneſs, into the nothingneſs, into the ſilence of his ſpirit before the Lord; into the putting off of all his knowledge, wiſdom, underſtanding, abilities, all that he is, hath done, or can do, out of this meaſure of life, into which he is to travel, that he may be clothed and filled with the nature, Spirit, and power of the Lord.

Now in this meaſure of life which is of Chriſt (and in which Chriſt is, and appears to the ſoul) there is the

the power of life and death; power to kill to the flesh, and power to quicken to God; power to cause the soul to cease from its own workings, and power to work in and for the soul what God requires, and what is acceptable in his sight. And in this God is to be waited upon and worshipped continually (both in private and in publick) according as his Spirit draws and teaches.

For the Lord requireth of his people not only to worship him apart, but to meet together to worship him, in the seasons, and according to the drawings of his Spirit: and they that are taught of him, dare not forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is; but watch against the temptations and snares, which the enemy lays to deceive them therefrom, and to disturb their sense by, that they might not feel the drawings of the Father thereunto.

And this is the manner of their worship. They are to wait upon the Lord, to meet in the silence of flesh, and to watch for the stirrings of his life, and the breakings forth of his power amongst them. And in the breakings forth of that power they may pray, speak, exhort, rebuke, sing, or mourn, &c. according as the Spirit teaches, requires, and gives utterance. But if the Spirit do not require to speak, and give to utter, then every one is to sit still in his place (in his heavenly place I mean) feeling his own measure, feeding thereupon, receiving therefrom (into his spirit) what the Lord giveth. Now in this is edifying, pure edifying, precious edifying; his soul who thus waits, is hereby particularly edified by the Spirit of the Lord at every meeting. And then also there is the life of the whole felt in every vessel that is turned to its measure; insomuch as the warmth of life in each vessel doth not only warm the particular, but they are like an heap of fresh and living coals, warming one another, insomuch as a great strength, freshness, and vigour of life flows into all. And if any be burthened, tempted, buffeted by Satan, bowed down, overborne, languish-

languiſhiug, afflicted, diſtreſſed, &c. the eſtate of ſuch is felt in Spirit and ſecret cries, or open (as the Lord pleaſeth) aſcend up to the Lord for them, and they many times find eaſe and relief, in a few words ſpoken, or without words, if it be the ſeaſon of their help and relief with the Lord.

For abſolutely ſilent meetings (wherein there is a reſolution not to ſpeak) we know not; but we wait on the Lord, either to feel him in words, or in ſilence of ſpirit without words, as he pleaſeth. And that which we aim at, and are inſtructed to by the Spirit of the Lord as to ſilent meetings, is that the fleſh in every one be kept ſilent, and that there be no building up, but in the Spirit and power of the Lord.

Now there are ſeveral ſtates of people: ſome feel little of the Lord's preſence; but feel temptations and thoughts, with many wanderings and rovings of mind. Theſe are not yet acquainted with the power, or at leaſt know not its dominion, but rather feel dominion of the evil over the good in them. And this is a ſore travailing and mournful ſtate, and meetings to ſuch as theſe (many times) may ſeem to themſelves rather for the worſe than for the better. Yet even theſe, turning, as much as may be, from ſuch things, and cleaving (or at leaſt in truth of heart deſiring to cleave) to that which diſliketh or witneſſeth againſt them, have acceptance with the Lord herein: and continuing to wait in this trouble and diſtreſs (keeping cloſe to meetings, in fear and ſubjection to the Lord who requireth it, though with little appearing benefit), do reap an hidden benefit at preſent, and ſhall reap a more clear and manifeſt benefit afterwards, as the Lord waſteth and weareth out that in them, wherein the darkneſs hath its ſtrength. Now to evidence that the Lord doth require theſe ſilent meetings, or meetings after this manner ſilent, it may thus appear.

God is to be worſhipped in ſpirit, in his own power and life, and this is at his own diſpoſe. His church is a gathering in the Spirit. If any man ſpeak there, he

he muſt ſpeak as the oracle of God, as the veſſel out of which God ſpeaks; as the trumpet out of which he gives the ſound. Therefore there is to be a waiting in ſilence, till the Spirit of the Lord move to ſpeak, and alſo give words to ſpeak. For a man is not to ſpeak his own words, or in his own wiſdom or time; but the Spirit's words, in the Spirit's wiſdom and time, which is when he moves and gives to ſpeak. And ſeeing the Spirit inwardly nouriſheth, when he giveth not to ſpeak words, the inward ſenſe and nouriſhment is to be waited for, and received as it was given when there are no words. Yea, the miniſtry of the Spirit and life is more cloſe and immediate when without words, than when with words, as has been often felt, and is faithfully teſtified by many witneſſes. Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, how and what things God reveals to his children by his Spirit, when they wait upon him in his pure fear, and worſhip and converſe with him in ſpirit; for then the fountain of the great deep is unſealed, and the everlaſting ſprings ſurely give up the pure and living water.

LIFE and IMMORTALITY

Brought to LIGHT through the

GOSPEL.

BEING A TRUE

DISCOVERY

OF THE

NATURE and GROUND

OF THE

RELIGION and KINGDOM of CHRIST;

IN SEVERAL

WEIGHTY QUERIES, Propounded;

AND OTHER

SERIOUS MATTERS treated of,

Highly importing the

ETERNAL SALVATION of SOULS.

WRITTEN BY

ISAAC PENINGTON,

In the Time of his Impriſonment in READING GAOL.

THE

PREFACE.

THE goſpel is the power of God unto ſalvation. Oh! bleſſed is he, who meets with that which powerfully ſaves! Moſt mens religion is but a talk and profeſſion of that which they have not; and what will ſuch a kind of religion avail, when it comes to be tried by the piercing fire of the Spirit of burning, and pure (impartial) judgment. "Neither circumciſion "availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new "creature." Alas! how few know that! And yet "if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature; old "things are paſſed away, and all things become new" there. Who can bear the deciſion of this trial? For many pretend to be in Chriſt, and yet they themſelves are ſtill in the old nature and ſpirit. "Be not deceived," ſaith the apoſtle, "God is not mocked." Alas! how many are deceived about their religion! Indeed it is impoſſible for a man not to be deceived, who knoweth not the anointing, nor is taught his religion by the anointing. He is truth and no lie, and he teacheth truth and no lie; but mens apprehenſions and conceivings upon the holy ſcriptures and myſteries of God's kingdom, are but like themſelves, empty and vain. Oh! that men could ſee with the true eye, hear with the true ear, underſtand with the true heart! Then might they know indeed, and come to witneſs the Ethiopian ſkin waſhed, and the leopard ſpots changed; but till then, they may change from one opinion to another, and from one profeſſion and way of religion to another, and yet in nature, ſpirit, mind, and heart, yea,

yea, and in converſation alſo (as to the ſubſtance thereof), remain ſtill one and the ſame. And what will become of men, whoſe hope is in their religion, in their knowledge of Chriſt, in their faith, in their worſhip, &c. if all theſe, when they come to be tried, ſhall be found wanting of the true nature and virtue, and condemned by the Lord for dead and dry! Oh! that men knew what ſhould be yoked down, what ſhould be turned from and denied, how gloriouſly and takingly ſoever it appears! "All fleſh is graſs;" all fleſhly knowledge and religion muſt paſs away. That which the earthly man can comprehend in his underſtanding, is but the outward, the fleſhly part of religion; the ſpiritual knowledge, the living knowledge, is reſerved for, and given to, the ſpiritual capacity and underſtanding, which the children of the Moſt High received in the new birth, and holy begettings of life.

Here are ſome queries, held forth in love to thee, reader, to bring thee to a true ſenſe in many weighty matters. They are not of a confounding (unleſs it be to that part which is not to know), but of an opening nature; they were ſweet to my taſte, which (as in God's preſence, and by the virtue of his life and Spirit flowing in me) reliſhed the things queried of. I deſire they may be profitable to thee alſo, and that thou mayeſt witneſs the guidance of God's Spirit, leading thee into, and giving thee faithfully to walk in, the way that leads to eternal reſt. For our days in this world are but for a moment, and then we muſt be judged, and diſpoſed of by the Lord, for ever; each perſon according to the nature and ſpirit he is of, "and according to the deeds done in the body, whe-"ther they have been good or evil." The Lord give thee ſo to conſider thy ways, that thou mayeſt apply thy heart to true wiſdom; which conſiſts in fearing of God, and departing from evil; which the leaſt child, that is taught of God, learns; and thoſe that are grown up in holineſs and righteouſneſs, are ſkilful and perfect in; ſo that they cannot do any thing againſt the truth, but in and for the truth.

There

There are alſo ſome queſtions anſwered; one about preaching the goſpel after the apoſtaſy, another about the reaſon of God's not teaching others what it pleaſeth him to teach us; and the way of his teaching us. There is likewiſe ſomewhat concerning the threefold appearance of Chriſt, and touching Mount Sinai, from whence the law of the letter was given; and Mount Sion, from whence the law of the Spirit goes forth; as likewiſe concerning the temple and ſacrifices under the goſpel, and of the way to know one's election, and to obtain full aſſurance thereof, &c. All theſe ſprang from life in my heart, for thy ſake who breatheſt after the Lord, and after his pure way and holy path of life, and who readeſt in humility, fear, and uprightneſs; and my prayers to the God of my life go along with them, that thy heart may be opened by him, in the reading of them, and that thou mayeſt have the ſenſe of them in the ſhinings of his light in thine own heart, whoſe work it is to cauſe it to ſhine out of the darkneſs; that his glorious goſpel may not be hid from the ſons of men; but, through the virtue, power, and operation of the Spirit of truth (which firſt convinceth of ſin, and then leadeth out of it, into that which is pure and holy) they may come to be acquainted with the myſtery of life, which hath been hid from ages and generations, but is now made manifeſt to God's children and ſanctified ones; which being made manifeſt to them, is revealed and known to be Chriſt in them, the hope of glory. The Lord grant thou mayeſt know and experience him to be ſo to thee and in thee. Amen.

A

FEW WORDS in GENERAL,

To thoſe that Deſire the

KNOWLEDGE of the TRUE GOD.

The Inſpiration of the Almighty giveth Underſtanding.

We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Underſtanding, that we may know him that is True.

IT is a great matter to receive an underſtanding from the Lord; which until a man doth, his knowledge is neither true, living, nor ſaving.

Now, he that would receive an underſtanding from the Lord, muſt wait to know the beginnings of the new and holy underſtanding; and what that underſtanding and knowledge is, which ſtands in the way thereof, and how to part therewith: and then he muſt faithfully loſe and part with it for the other; which is pure, true, and heavenly.

And when a man hath received an underſtanding from the Lord, then he may weigh, conſider, and come to know things aright: but till then, deceit will lodge in his heart, and have power over him; and his very wiſdom and knowledge will pervert him, and turn him aſide from the way of life and truth. The wiſe profeſſing Jews were hindered from owning the Meſſiah, by the very knowledge which they had gathered and comprehended out of the letter of the ſcriptures.

But

But if a man hath received an underſtanding from the Lord in meaſure, yet it is an hard matter to keep that underſtanding; and he muſt lie very low and humble, who ſo doth. Oh! what a continual watch hath my ſoul had (and ſtill hath) againſt that part wherein my religion formerly ſtood! For though the Lord had reached to the pure ſeed of life in me, and had quickened my ſoul thereby; yet I knew not how to turn to the ſeed, and abide in the ſeed, and to hold my knowledge and life there; but was ſtill ſtriving to live and know (and comprehend and practiſe) in a part above the ſeed; and the enemy was ſtill too hard for me, and did often deprive me of the benefit or right uſe of what the Lord had wrought in me, and freely beſtowed upon me.

Alas! who can underſtand this voice! Surely it is very hard for any ſo to do, but ſuch who have had ſome ſenſible and lively experience thereof in themſelves; but for want of this knowledge, ſenſe, and experience, many are deeply deceived concerning the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſtate of their own ſouls, concerning faith in him, love to him, pardon of ſin and juſtification in and through him; regeneration and ſanctification by his Spirit; and concerning walking in the way of holineſs, and obeying his commands; and ſo err in heart exceedingly (both in doctrine and practice) concerning the weighty things which appertain to ſalvation.

Now I having erred in time paſt in my former profeſſions, and been deeply perplexed and diſtreſſed, through my erring from the holy ſeed, Spirit, and power of life; bear with me! bear with me! yea, I ſay again, bear with me, if I pity others, and ſincerely deſire that their eyes may be opened to ſee the pure, living, holy, undefiled way, in which no defiled ſpirit can walk; but a man muſt be truly made alive, and truly cleanſed in mind and ſpirit, before he can walk in this way. Now, if we experimentally, moſt tenderly, and in true love, witneſs, from the God of life and ſalvation, where the life of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt,

and the cleanſing of his blood and Spirit is met with, and that according to the plain teſtimony of the ſcriptures, why are ye offended with us for our love, and for telling you the truth, as the Lord hath opened our eyes, and taught us to ſee and read it in the ſcriptures of truth, and as we have experimentally found it in Jeſus?

Well! the Lord knoweth how we are many times mourning and praying for you, while ye are reviling and backbiting us; for we know the way and courſe of that ſpirit wherein ye oppoſe us. And, oh! that ye yourſelves alſo did know what ſpirit it is, which thus acts you! For then, ſurely, ye would confeſs it to be the very ſame which oppoſed Chriſt in the days of his fleſh, having only a different cover and way of appearance; that, crying him up as to come; this, as already come; but both denying him who is the Meſſiah. For in that ye deny his Spirit, life, appearance and power in the leaſt of his, ye deny him. Oh! that ye could feel the tender bowels, truth of heart, and true underſtanding from God's Holy Spirit, wherein this is written! Oh! that ye could rightly diſtinguiſh between the precious and the vile; and not call that vile, which in God's ſight is precious; nor that precious, which in God's ſight is vile. Ye muſt feel the holy ſeed, the living of God, judge in you; and ye judge only in that, or ye will err in judging according to the appearance, and not judge the righteous judgment.

Reading Goal, 26th of the
Third Month, 1671.

I. P.

LIFE

LIFE and IMMORTALITY

Brought to Light by the

GOSPEL:

BEING

A true Diſcovery of the NATURE and GROUND of the Religion and Kingdom of CHRIST, &c.

I.

Some Queries concerning the State of the Church as it was in the Apoſtles Days, and was to be afterwards.

Query 1. WAS not the church exceeding beautiful, and in heavenly glory, in the days of the apoſtles? Did ſhe only travail after life and glory? Did ſhe not alſo bring forth? Did ſhe not witneſs the kingdom come, the power come, the eternal life come? And did ſhe not partake thereof, and dwell therein? Was ſhe not a woman clothed with the ſun, and the moon under her feet, and crowned with a crown of twelve ſtars? Yea, did ſhe not bring forth the man-child, which was to rule all nations with a rod of iron? Who can read this ſtate, who is not in ſome meaſure a partaker of the ſame glory?

Query 2. Was not this heaven afterwards wrapped up, rolled up; and did not this glory paſs away?

Did not the great red dragon fight with the woman? And did ſhe not fly into the wilderneſs, and was not the man-child caught up to God? And did not the remnant of her ſeed (who had the teſtimony of Jeſus, and who kept hiis commandments) teſtify and propheſy in ſackcloth? Read the xith and xiith chapters of the Revelations.

Query 3. Upon the flight of the true church into the wilderneſs (when ſhe was thus gone out of ſight) did not the falſe church ſtart up; which made a glorious and taking appearance in the world, to the eye of man's wiſdom? Did not ſhe ſit upon a ſcarlet-coloured beaſt (wiſe and ſtrong) having ſeven heads, and ten horns? Was ſhe not arrayed in purple and ſcarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious ſtones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, making the kings, nations, and inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication? What do thoſe things mean? What did the wiſdom of God thus deſcribe her for?

Query 4. What did the true church carry into the wilderneſs with her, and what did ſhe leave behind her? Did not the temple, the altar, and the true worſhippers go along with her? Did not the Gentiles, ſuch as were not true Jews, ſuch as could not come into the temple (but only into the outward court, and worſhip there) did not theſe ſtay behind? And had not theſe Gentiles henceforth (from the true church's flight into the wilderneſs) the outward court given to them, that they might make uſe of it (and worſhip in it) as much as they would? The virtue, the life, the power, the Spirit being taken away, and removed with the true church, which fled into the wilderneſs, what did God regard the outward? "Leave it out of "my meaſure, ſaith the Lord, and give it to the Gen-"tiles," Rev. xi. 2.

Query 5. What is the cup, the golden cup, which this falſe church hath in her hand, wherein are ſorceries and witchcrafts, wherewith ſhe bewitcheth people, and maketh them drunk? Is it not a glorious appearance

ance of things without the true life and power? Doctrines concerning God, doctrines concerning Chriſt, doctrines concerning worſhip, doctrines concerning ſanctity, &c. Yea, but the Spirit, the life, the power, that was in the apoſtles days, is wanting. What remains of theſe is to be found with the true church in the wilderneſs (the blood of whoſe ſeed ſhe drinks) not with her.

Query 6. What will become of this great woman in the end; this rich, this glorious church? Shall ſhe continue for ever? Shall ſhe ſit as a queen for ever, and never ſee ſorrow? Shall the true church never come out of the wilderneſs, to be reſtored to her beauty and glory again? Nay, nay; in one day ſhall her plagues come; death, and mourning, and famine. It is true, ſhe is wiſe and ſtrong (and the beaſt alſo, on which ſhe ſits and rides, who is able to make war with? ſaith man's wiſdom); but wiſer and ſtronger is the Lord God Almighty, who judgeth her, and who is taking and will take to him his great power, wherewith he will thunder againſt her, until he hath brought her down, and her fleſh be utterly burnt with fire.

Query 7. What ſhall become of thoſe who drink of her cup, and who believe and worſhip as ſhe teacheth? Shall they not all drink of the wine of the cup of the wrath of God Almighty, poured out without mixture? Shall they not partake of her dreadful plagues, in the hour of her judgment? Read Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11. and chap. xviii. For theſe things are to come to paſs as certainly as they were foretold; and when they do come to paſs, bleſſed ſhall the ſaints be who have ſuffered with patience, keeping the commandments and the faith of Jeſus; and woe will be to them who have perſecuted them, and drunk their blood. Read the xiiith, xivth, xviith, and xixth chapters of the Revelations, which ſignify of, and teſtify to, theſe things.

Now whereas many ſay, that the book of the Revelations is ſuch a myſtical book, that it is not to be underſtood; to what end then was it written? It was the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto

him, to ſhew unto his ſervants things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs, chap. i. 1. and would Chriſt give them forth in ſuch words as could not be underſtood? Again it is ſaid, ver. 5. Bleſſed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep thoſe things which are written therein; for the time is at hand. How can any be bleſſed in reading, or how can any keep what is written therein, without underſtanding the things contained in it? How can any follow the true church into the wilderneſs, or avoid being taken with the golden cup of fornications of the falſe church, or refuſe the mark of the beaſt (that he take it neither on his forehead nor hand, nor have the name of the beaſt upon him, nor ſo much as the number of his name) unleſs he truly and rightly underſtand theſe warnings and deſcriptions of the Holy Spirit of God, given forth in the book, to preſerve in the way of truth, in the way of life (though through great ſufferings and tribulations) out of the way of ſpiritual whoredom and death? For myſtical Babylon, the nations of the earth and great ones (generally) commit fornication with, Rev. xvii. 2. and xviii. 3. Indeed this book is a myſtery to man's wiſdom; for it was not given to the wiſdom of this world, but is hid from that; but God gave it Chriſt to give to his ſervants; and it is not a myſtery (but opened and revealed by the Father's Spirit) to the children of the true wiſdom, who are inſtructed and taught of God to eſcape the bed of whoredom and ſpiritual fornication, which the earthly wiſdom (in the wiſeſt men of this world) is intangled in.

II.

II.

Some Queries on Chap. xxix. *and* xxx. *of* DEUT. *compared with* ROM. x.

Query 1. DID not God command Moſes to make a covenant with the children of Iſrael in the land of Moab, beſides the covenant he made with them in Horeb? Deut. xxix. 1.

Query 2. What was this covenant? Was it of the ſame nature with the former, or was it of a different nature? Was not the former the covenant of the law? And was not this the covenant of the goſpel? Did not this covenant contain the promiſe of circumciſing the heart? Deut. xxx. 6. Whereas, under the other covenant, notwithſtanding all the temptations, ſigns, and miracles which they had ſeen in Egypt, and in the wilderneſs, about the ſpace of forty years; yet the Lord had not given them an heart to perceive, and eyes to ſee, and ears to hear, unto that day. But Moſes and Aaron, with Caleb and Joſhua, who knew and partook of the other covenant, they were of a better ſpirit, and underſtood the leadings and commands of God, and followed after him.

Query 3. Had the Jews minded this covenant, might they not have been able to keep the other alſo? Did any fail in ſacrifices, or outward obedience to the law, who kept to this covenant? What an holy man was Samuel, who did not ſo much as err in government, but could plead with the people, Whoſe ox or aſs have I taken, or whom have I defrauded or oppreſſed? Zacharias, and Elizabeth his wife, walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs. And ſo the children of God in the goſpel, who have a new heart, and a new ſpirit, and walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit and law of life in Chriſt Jeſus, they alſo fulfil the righteouſneſs of the law declared in the letter, Rom. viii. 4.

Query

Query 4. What is the commandment of this covenant, and where is it written? The commandments of the other covenant are written in the law of Moſes, and in tables of ſtone; but where is this commandment written, or where is it to be found? Is it in heaven above, to be fetched down from thence; or is it beyond the ſea? &c. Nay, is it not very nigh? Is not the Word of this commandment nigh in the mouth and in the heart? And is it not there placed by the Lord for this very end, that men might hear and do it?

Query 5. Was not this the Word or commandment of life and good, or of death and evil to the Jews? (See chap. xxx. 14, 15.) And is it not ſo alſo to mankind? He that hears and obeys the Word of this commandment, doth he not live and partake of good? He that diſobeys it, doth he not die, and undergo wrath and evil, tribulation and anguiſh upon his ſoul from the hand of the Lord, either poured out upon him at preſent, or treaſured up for him againſt hereafter? Read Rom. ii. 5, 6, &c.

Query 6. Was not this other covenant, this ſecond covenant, this new covenant, which God bid Moſes make with them then, the ſame which God makes with believers in the days of the goſpel? The old covenant had been made with the Jews before; was not this the new? They had had the law in the letter before, wherein the commandment was afar off; but is not the commandment of the new covenant (the law of the Spirit of life) nigh? And had not the people of the Jews the Spirit of the Lord nigh to inſtruct them, by virtue of this covenant? That they had ſo, is plain, Nehem. ix. 20. and Iſai. lxiii. 10.; but whether they had the Spirit nigh to them by virtue of the old covenant, or by virtue of the new (which Moſes was appointed by God to make with them, as is afore expreſſed) let the wiſe in heart conſider. And whether the tender mercies which God all along expreſſed to them (as is mentioned Iſai. lxiii. 7.) were by virtue of that covenant wherein God had continual

continual advantages and provocations againſt them, or by virtue of this covenant, from which mercy and redemption is continually ſpringing freely towards the Iſrael of God?

Query 7. Whether the Word of faith which the apoſtles preached, was not the ſame Word nigh in the mouth and heart which Moſes preached? Is not the Word of life, the Word of faith, the Word of the new covenant, one and the ſame thing in all ages and generations? Indeed there are outward ſayings and teſtimonies after divers manners; but Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. And the commandment of life in the mouth and heart changeth not, but is always one and the ſame.

Query 8. What is the juſtification under this covenant; or what is that which God hath an eye to in juſtifying any perſon here? Is it not the obedience of faith? What doth God condemn but unbelief? And will he not juſtify faith? For faith flows from life, and life from Chriſt. So that indeed here the holy root makes all that are of it holy, and the righteous root makes all that are of it righteous; and he that doth righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous, 1 John iii. 7. And Chriſt is here indeed made unto the ſoul that thus receives him and obeys him as the Word and commandment of life: I ſay, he is indeed made unto ſuch an one of God wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption; and bleſſed are they that do not miſtake about this, but come truly to witneſs it.

III.

Some Queries concerning Deſtruction and Salvation.

Query 1. WHETHER there be not ſomewhat which deſtroys, which hath the nature of death and deſtruction in it, and which leaveneth with death and deſtruction, as it is let in and received?

Query

Query 2. Whether there be not ſomewhat alſo which ſaves, which hath the nature of life and ſalvation in it, and which leaveneth with life and ſalvation, as it is let in and received?

Query 3. Whether that which deſtroys be not near, and whether that which ſaves be not near alſo? (Doth not Chriſt ſtand at the door and knock? And may not he be heard and let in? See Rev. iii. 20.)

Query 4. Whether this, which is ſo near, and ſo able to ſave, was not that which ſaved in all ages and generations, even before Chriſt appeared in a body of fleſh, and the ſhedding his blood?

Query 5. Whether, after Chriſt appeared in a body of fleſh, and ſhedding his blood, any can be ſaved thereby; or by any believing on Chriſt whatſoever; without letting in or receiving that life and power which ſaves? Be not deceived; God is not mocked. He that believeth in the power which raiſed our Lord Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, and is ſubject to the power, ſhall be redeemed and ſaved thereby. For death came by the ſoul's ſeparation from the power which gave life, and Chriſt ſaves by bringing to the power again (ſo that he that would indeed be ſaved by Chriſt, muſt believe in God through him, and feel the power which redeems.) But let a man believe ever ſo much concerning God and Chriſt, until he feel this, and be changed by the virtue and operation of this, he cannot be ſaved, but is ſtill in his ſins, and under condemnation and wrath, becauſe of ſin, whatever he thinks of himſelf.

Query 6. Whether Chriſt was not the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever; even before he took up the body of fleſh, while he was in the body, after he laid down the body, and after he took it up again and appeared in it to his diſciples?

Query 7. Whether Chriſt, where he inwardly and ſpiritually appears, and is received, doth not diſcover, ſhake, diſſettle, and remove that nature, which cannot receive the law, and ſo bring up and bring forth the heavenly ſeed, which was afore the law (which is appointed

appointed by God for a generation to himself) which always doth the will of him who quickens it, and who fills it with life and power from on high?

IV.

Some Queries on COLOSS. i. 27, 28, 29. *(Observe, that in* ver. 27. *whereas it is in our common Translation rendered, This Mystery* among *the Gentiles; it is in some other Translations rendered, This Mystery* in *the Gentiles; and so it is in the Greek.)*

Query 1. WHETHER there be not a mystery of light, a mystery of life; somewhat of true light hidden, somewhat of true life hidden in the Gentiles? Whatsoever makes manifest, is light, saith the apostle, Ephes. v. 13, 14. And that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, Rom. i. Is there not somewhat in the Gentiles, which in some measure discovers somewhat contrary to God in them, and is many times working in their minds against it? Is not this of a precious nature? and hath it not precious virtue and power in it, though it be little took notice of by them?

Query 2. Do not the saints know what this mystery is? Do they not know what is the riches and glory of it? Indeed it hath been hid from ages and generations, so that they knew it not; but is it hid from the saints also in the day of the gospel? is it not revealed in them and to them?

Query 3. What is this mystery in them in whom it is revealed? Is it not Christ in them? Is it not the hope of glory in them? Do they not know it to be Christ? Do they not know it to be the hope of glory? Who can damp the faith, or darken the knowledge, of those who feel the mystery of life revealed in them? who feel Christ (the hope of glory) living, dwelling, and reigning in the authority and power of the Father, in their own hearts?

Query

Query 4. Did not the apoſtles preach this myſtery? Did they not preach the word of faith within in the heart? the kingdom within? Chriſt, the hope of glory within? Did they not preach this meſſage of the goſpel (which they had from Chriſt to carry to men) that "God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all?" And did they not preach it to this very end, to turn men, and bring men from the darkneſs within to the light within? that in it they might have union and fellowſhip with God, who is light. Can any have fellowſhip with God, who is light, but as his ſpirit is brought out of the inward darkneſs into the inward light?

Query 5. What did the apoſtle Paul, and the other apoſtles aim at, in their warning men, and teaching them in all wiſdom? Was it not to perfect the work of God in them, and that they might preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus?

Query 6. Did not the grace and power of God go along with the apoſtles, and work in them mightily to this end, even for the perfecting the ſaints? And the grace and power of God, working mightily againſt ſin and the power of Satan, is it not able to conquer Satan, and to make him fall like lightning, and to trample him under feet? Conſider ver. 19. and 2 Theſſ. i. 11, 12.

Query 7. Did the apoſtles ever preach ſuch a doctrine, that no man could be perfected in this life; but man muſt always (every day) be committing ſin? Nay, did they not ſpeak wiſdom among them that were perfect, and ſay, Let as many of us as be perfect, be thus minded? Did they not diſtinguiſh between the weak, and between the ſtrong and perfect? Do they not ſpeak of ſome that had overcome the wicked one, and were born of God, and did not ſin? It is a precious thing to feel the power of God regenerating the mind; but it is much more precious to witneſs it regenerated. But that ſtate none know but they that are in it; but this is moſt certain, that ſin is ſhut of it, and that all things are new there.

Query

Query 8. Will the myſtery of life, where it is received and turned to, ever ceaſe working againſt the myſtery of death, until it hath wrought it out of the mind? Shall judgment never be brought forth unto victory over ſin in the heart? Shall there never be pure and full communion with the Lord here in this world, without the interruption of ſin? "Theſe things, "ſaith John, I write to you, that your joy may be "full." Shall the joy never be full in any? How can the joy be full, where ſin hath power, and breaks in upon the ſoul, and prevaileth upon the mind, even to the committing of it daily? The ſoul that is weary of ſin, and grieved at its grieving God's Spirit thereby, can never come to full union and fellowſhip with the Lord, nor to have its joy full, while it doth that which grieves God's Spirit; for it is impoſſible but it ſhould grieve the ſoul alſo, and weaken its joy and rejoicing in the Lord.

V.

Some Queries concerning the Way of Life, and Myſtery of the Goſpel.

Query 1. IS not the way of life, the way of holineſs, the way of truth, the way of peace, one and the ſame in all ages and generations? Was there ever, or ſhall there ever be another than that which was from the beginning?

Query 2. Is not this way a pure way, a clean way? Can any impure thing walk in it? Is not the gate ſtrait, and the way narrow, that leadeth unto life? Is it eaſy finding it, or is it eaſy entering into it, and walking in it? Doth not the corruption and unholineſs of the hearts of many, hinder them from walking in the holy way of life and peace?

Query 3. Is not this way a myſtery? Can any learn it, but thoſe whoſe eyes are opened by the Lord, and to whom the myſtery is revealed by him? Can any diſcern

diſcern or underſtand it, but the children of the pure heavenly wiſdom, whom the Lord teacheth, and whoſe eyes he openeth, to ſee and juſtify it in every age?

Query 4. Is not the whole viſion of God, the whole viſion of life, the whole viſion of peace, a book ſealed to all ſorts (both learned and unlearned in every age and generation) but thoſe to whom the Lord unſeals it?

Query 5. May not ſuch as are not at all acquainted with the myſtery of godlineſs, the myſtery of life, the myſtery of redemption, read what the ſcriptures ſay concerning theſe things, and get a great deal of knowledge (from the letter of the ſcriptures) into their minds, and be able to raiſe doctrines, reaſons, uſes, &c. and back all by ſcriptures very plentifully? But are not thoſe who teach not from the myſtery of life, and gift of the Spirit, but only what they have gathered and formed from the letter; I ſay, are not ſuch blind leaders of the blind? and is it poſſible but that they themſelves, and ſuch as follow them, ſhould fall into the ditch? For it is only the myſtery of life and redemption (not a literal knowledge and wiſdom, though with an endeavour to practiſe according thereto) which preſerves out of the ditch. Oh! that this were duly conſidered of! for it is tenderly and weightily propoſed.

Query 6. What is the knowledge of Chriſt which ſaves? Is it a knowledge of him after the letter, or a knowledge of him in the Spirit and power of the endleſs life? Can he be known truly, livingly, and ſavingly, without the Father's revealing him in man? Or can any truly call him Lord, but they that are firſt taught by the Father to diſcern his ſpiritual and heavenly glory, and to receive him and bow to him in Spirit?

Query 7. What it is to kiſs the Son? Can any do ſo, but thoſe who diſcern and receive the light of his Spirit?

Query 8. Can any truly know the Father, unleſs the Son reveal him? or can any know the Son, unleſs the Father

Father reveal him? I know men may get notions out of the ſcriptures concerning God the Father and his Son: but can they get true knowledge of either without the inſpiration of the Almighty, which giveth underſtanding?

Query 9. Can any perſon fear God, and depart from evil (any-where upon the face of the earth) without ſome viſit of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to his ſoul, and without receiving ſomewhat of life and power from him? He is the wiſdom of God, he can teach this; but can any elſe teach it? If none elſe can teach it, then he that learned it muſt needs learn it of him. Is not this (to wit, to fear God, and depart from evil) the path of wiſdom, which is hid from all living, but ſuch as are taught by Chriſt, who is the wiſdom of God? Read Job xxviii. 12. to the end of the chapter, and conſider. For doth not the Spirit of Chriſt, which convinceth of ſin, reach to all men, and miniſter to all men, inwardly and ſpiritually, in ſome days of inſtruction about fearing God, and departing from evil?

Query 10. Can any be acquainted with the fear of God, and be ſenſible of the hour of his judgment, and give glory to him, and worſhip him, but they muſt know and receive the everlaſting goſpel? They that are ſent to preach this after the apoſtaſy, are they not ſent to preach it as the everlaſting goſpel? Read Rev. xiv. 6, 7. and conſider. For come to life and power in any doctrine, which Chriſt ſends his meſſengers to preach towards the ſalvation of mens ſouls, a man comes to the goſpel preſently; but read and aſſent to, and practiſe all the things (as well as men can) related in the ſcriptures, without the life and power, and ſo acknowledge and believe all that is ſaid concerning Chriſt; yet for all this, and in the midſt of all this, a man may miſs of the goſpel; for the goſpel is an hidden myſtery of the life and power, ſee Coloſſ. i. 26, 27.

Query 11. Is not the meſſage of the goſpel, That God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all? Doth

not the Spirit of Chriſt preach this, more or leſs, to all people under heaven? Yea, is not the goſpel preached in every creature, and hid in thoſe that are loſt, whom the god of this world blindeth? For is not the Spirit of God, in ſome meaſure, every-where convincing men of ſin, and drawing them out of darkneſs into the ſenſe and obedience of light? And will not this be the general and univerſal condemnation of the world, that they did not bring their deeds to the light, but turned from it and hated it, loving the darkneſs more than it, becauſe their deeds were evil, and they had not a mind to part with them, but to remain and abide in them?

Alas! alas! men ſhould paſs through the knowledge of things after the letter, into the knowledge of things after the Spirit and power of the endleſs life; but inſtead thereof, men ſtick in their apprehenſions of the letter: and if any man be taught of God, and have the things of his kingdom, and the myſtery of the ſcriptures, revealed to him in the Spirit, and ſo ſignify of them in the words which God's wiſdom teacheth; yet ſo men know them not, but oppoſe and reſiſt the miniſtration of life and power in their day and generation! And this will be bitterneſs in the latter end, even as bitter to the profeſſors of this age, as the former denying of Chriſt's appearance in the fleſh was to the profeſſors of that age.

VI.

Some Queries concerning Righteouſneſs or Juſtification.

Query 1. IS there not a new covenant under the goſpel, as well as there was an old covenant under the law?

Query 2. What did the old covenant require? Did it not require obedience to the law of Moſes? What doth the new covenant require? Doth it not require faith in Chriſt, and obedience to his Spirit? Doth it not

not require faith in the grace, and obedience to the grace which bringeth ſalvation, teaching to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, &c. ?

Query 3. What is the righteouſneſs or juſtification in the old covenant? What doth God juſtify in the old covenant? Doth he not juſtify the obedience thereto, and condemn all diſobedience? What is the righteouſneſs or juſtification of the new covenant? What doth God juſtify in men under the new covenant? Doth he not juſtify their faith in Chriſt, and their obedience to the law of his Spirit? Is not whatſoever is not of faith ſin, and condemned; and whatſoever is of faith holy, and juſtified?

Query 4. What is faith? Is it not the gift of God? What is obedience? Doth it not flow from faith? Is it not performed by the power and in the newneſs of the Spirit? and is not that juſtifiable, and always juſtified in the ſight of God? Doth it not ſpring from the new tree, from the holy root of life in the heart? and whatſoever ſprings therefrom, is it not holy and righteous? And is not whatſoever is truly holy and righteous, juſtified and accounted righteous by the holy and righteous God?

Query 5. To what end was Chriſt made under the law, and did fulfill the righteouſneſs of the law? Was it not that he might accompliſh and fulfill that righteouſneſs, and ſo make way for the bringing in of the everlaſting righteouſneſs, even of the righteouſneſs of his own nature and Spirit, which is everlaſting? Is not this the righteouſneſs which the children of the new covenant experience in the new and living way? Is not this far beyond the righteouſneſs of the law, if they could fulfill it ever ſo exactly from the letter? For I feel a vaſt difference between that righteouſneſs which would belong to me from the law, and the righteouſneſs which flows into my heart from the nature and Spirit of Chriſt revealed in me, and which floweth up in me from my union with him: for this is abſolutely a righteouſneſs of another nature, of another kind, of another root.

Query 6. If Chriſt's fulfilling the law of Moſes, the law of the firſt covenant, were imputed to us as our righteouſneſs, and we juſtified in the ſight of God thereby, were not then our righteouſneſs the righteouſneſs of the firſt covenant in nature, and our juſtification a juſtification by the righteouſneſs of the firſt covenant? For Chriſt was made under the law, made under the firſt covenant, and fulfilled the righteouſneſs of the firſt covenant; ſo that if that be imputed to us for righteouſneſs, then the righteouſneſs of the firſt covenant is imputed to us for righteouſneſs, and is our righteouſneſs.

Query 7. Was not faith imputed to Abraham for righteouſneſs? What was his righteouſneſs? Was it not the faith which he had from Chriſt, whereby and wherewith he believed God? Is not faith of the nature of Chriſt? Is not true faith juſtified for ever, and doth it not juſtify him in whom it is found? And doth not goſpel-obedience flow from faith? and hath it not of the nature of faith in it? Oh! how pure and precious was it in the eye of God, that Abraham reaſoned not, conſulted not with fleſh and blood, but retired into faith in the pure power! "He "believed God," ſay the ſcriptures, "and it was "accounted to him for righteouſneſs:" and ſhall it not be imputed to us alſo, if we have the ſame faith, and believe in the ſame power?

VII.

Some Queries about being under the Law, and being under Grace.

Query 1. WHETHER they that have received the Spirit of grace, and are under the Spirit of grace; I ſay, whether they are under the law alſo, or witneſs freedom therefrom?

Query 2. What is the law? Is it not a miniſtration of death, of bondage, of condemnation? What is the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of grace? Is it not a Spirit

Spirit of life, a Spirit of liberty, a Spirit that frees from bondage? They that have received it, and are in ſubjection to it, do they not partake of its liberty, and through it come into dominion over ſin and death?

Query 3. Is the law to the righteous or unrighteous? Whom was it made for? He that cometh into the holy and righteous nature of the ſeed, doth he not come from under the law? Doth he not come into the nature, ſtate, and ſpirit, which is free from the law?

Query 4. What is it to come through the law into the liberty and redemption of ſons? What is it to know the ſeed free in the particular, and to come into the freedom of the ſeed? Doth not the Son make free, the Truth of God make free, all that come to it, and dwell in it? and are not they that are made free by it, free indeed? O Sion! thy children are all free-born! Jeruſalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all; and ſhe bringeth forth none but free children. They that dwell in the height of notion, they are not free; but they that dwell in the power of life, know that which makes free, and witneſs freedom by it.

VIII.

Some Queries for the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity to conſider of, and try their States by. For it is good for every one to know and underſtand his Eſtate aright (what it is in the Sight of the Lord) and not to be miſtaken in a Matter of ſo great Concernment.

Query 1. IS thy ſpirit, heart, mind, ſoul and body, a temple for God to dwell in? Who dwells in thy heart? Doth the Holy Spirit, or the unclean ſpirit? Is that diſlodged and purged out of thee, with which God will not dwell? Is that diſcovered and taken away, in which the wicked one dwelleth? O Jeruſalem! waſh thine heart from wickedneſs; how long ſhall thy vain thoughts lodge within

thee! O Jeruſalem! wilt thou not be made clean? When ſhall it once be? Is not forbearing to touch every unclean thing, and cleanſing from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, more neceſſary to the ſtate of a ſon and daughter of the Moſt High than moſt people are aware of? Read 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. and chap. vii. 1.

Query 2. Is Chriſt revealed in thee? Doth God dwell any-where, in any heart, but where Chriſt is, but where he is inwardly and ſpiritually revealed? "Know "ye not that Chriſt is in you, except ye be repro- "bates?" And can any know Chriſt in them, who have not had him revealed there by the Father? Almoſt all ſorts of pretenders to Chriſt own him as ſpoken of without; but the true Chriſtian witneſſeth him revealed within: for it pleaſeth the Father to reveal the Son in ſuch; and none can be truly ingrafted into Chriſt, but as Chriſt is in ſome meaſure made manifeſt within.

Query 3. How doſt thou confeſs Jeſus to be the Lord? Is it by notions from the letter, or by feeling his Spirit and power revealed within, and thy heart made ſubject to his Spirit and power inwardly revealed? For there is a confeſſing Chriſt in and by the Spirit, and a confeſſing him without the Spirit, according as men can read, conceive, and apprehend of him from the letter. Conſider which of theſe thine is.

Query 4. Art thou come out of the apoſtaſy and ſpirit of darkneſs, into the light and Spirit of Chriſt? What was the apoſtaſy from? Was it not from the Spirit, from the anointing? Wherein did it conſiſt? Did it conſiſt in holding a knowledge of Chriſt, and form of godlineſs out of the power? Art thou returned to the anointing? To the Holy Spirit of the Father? Haſt thou received it? Doſt thou live and walk in it, and not fulfill the luſts of the fleſh?

Query 5. Doſt thou know the tree of righteouſneſs, and the tree of unrighteouſneſs, inwardly? Haſt thou felt the axe laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and it cut down; and the holy plant of God (the plant

plant of his renown) planted in thy heart, and bringing forth fruit to him? Can the fruit ever become good in thee till the tree be made good? Can the corrupt tree ever bring forth the holy fruit of righteouſneſs to the Lord? Oh! mind thy growth! I mean, from what thou groweſt, and from what thy fruit proceedeth: for all the knowledge, faith, love, zeal, practices, &c. which proceed not from the renewed Spirit and nature, is not the good fruit which God calls for and accepts; but the denying the leaſt cuſtom or faſhion of this world, from a renewed nature, and from the drawings and teachings of God's Spirit, is good fruit, and accepted by him.

Query 6. Can any be redeemed to God, but by his judgment and righteouſneſs revealed in them? Is the ſoul redeemed from its enemies, while its enemies remain in ſtrength, and have the dominion over it? Where grace is received, and the ſoul taught by it and ſubject to it, doth it not break the dominion of ſin? As the ſpirit of judgment and burning is felt in any heart, doth it not cut down and burn up ſin there? And as the righteous Spirit is turned to, is not his righteous nature received, and doth not the holy and righteous ſeed ſpring up in the heart? and as it ſpringeth up, doth it not redeem and deliver that which is joined to it? Can any be redeemed by a righteouſneſs at a diſtance, without partaking of the new, and holy, and righteous image of the Son? And he that is righteous in meaſure, he may do righteouſneſs: but no man can do righteouſneſs, until he become righteous, by being joined to, changed by, and in ſome meaſure brought forth a new plant to God, in the new, righteous, and holy ſeed. See 1 John iii. 7.

Query 7. Do ye indeed know the new covenant? Was it ever inwardly revealed in you? Do ye know the difference between reading the holy directions given forth in the ſcriptures, and ſo getting them into your minds and practiſing them, as well as you can; I ſay, do ye know the difference between this and God's writing them in your hearts, and cauſing

you to walk in his ways? Do ye know the difference between reading in the letter and in the Spirit; and between walking according to the oldneſs of the letter, and according to the newneſs of the Spirit? Oh! that ye might not be deceived about theſe things, but might know the truth, as it is in Jeſus, and come into fellowſhip with us therein! For truly our fellowſhip is with the Father and the Son, in that which changeth not, but is one and the ſame for ever: yea, the Lord our God hath redeemed us out of all the changeable ways, religions and worſhips, into the one pure way of life, and into the worſhip in the one Spirit and truth, which changeth not, but is ſtill what it was, even one and the ſame before the law of Moſes, or writings of the prophets, all the time of the law, while Chriſt was in the fleſh, afterwards when he was revealed in Spirit, and all the time of the apoſtaſy, and after the apoſtaſy, and ſo for ever.

IX.

A Queſtion anſwered about Preaching the Goſpel after the Apoſtaſy.

Queſt. *WHY doth God after the apoſtaſy ſend an angel to preach the everlaſting goſpel, after a manner different from what it was preached before the apoſtaſy? How was it preached before the apoſtaſy? Was it not preached thus, That in Chriſt alone is the remiſſion of ſins, and ſalvation through faith in his blood? How is it to be preached after the apoſtaſy? Is not an angel from God ſent to preach it thus; Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worſhip him that made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and the fountains of waters? Is this the ſame goſpel that was preached before? How different is the ſound thereof! Surely this would ſeem not the ſame, but rather another goſpel, to any man who is not taught of God, and hath not received*

ceived of him the true underſtanding to obſerve and diſcern the nature of things.

Anſw. The goſpel is the ſame in ſubſtance, though differing in ſound and manner of appearance; and they that judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment, experience it to be the ſame: for whoever receives the goſpel thus preached, receives the power of God unto ſalvation, which goeth along with his fear, and with the hour of judgment, and with the true worſhip.

And this is the reaſon why the Lord ſends his angel thus to preach it; that he might ſhut out the birth of the falſe wiſdom, and convey it to the children of the true wiſdom. For in the apoſtaſy, the doctrines of the knowledge of Chriſt had been corrupted, and held in the wrong part; and men had got a wrong knowledge and a dead belief, concerning Chriſt and his blood, &c.

Therefore to ſhut out theſe, God ſo orders his goſpel to be preached, as theſe cannot underſtand it, nor know it to be the goſpel, nor come into this ſpiritual miniſtration of it; but thoſe whom the Lord toucheth, whoſe hearts he openeth and quickeneth, they (in the demonſtration of his Spirit) have the ſenſe and obedience of it: for men had got a form of religion, a form of knowledge, a form of doctrine, a form of worſhip out of the power. Therefore the Lord comes with the light of his Spirit, to ſever between that which was known and held out of the power, and that which was received and held in the power, and ſo preached the truth, that none but thoſe that are of the truth, can own and receive it.

Had he ſent an angel to preach the birth of Chriſt, the death of Chriſt, his reſurrection, &c. all the dead would receive this; but to preach thus, "Fear God, "come to the Spirit of judgment and burning; wor- "ſhip him that made the heaven, the earth, the ſea, "and fountains of waters;" who can underſtand what this means? Who can know this to be the everlaſting goſpel, but he that is taught of God?

This

This is to preach God the Creator, ſaith the wiſe profeſſor; *this is not to preach Chriſt the Redeemer*; *this is not to preach the everlaſting goſpel*, will they readily ſay. Yes; but God who is wiſe, and knows what the goſpel is, and ſends his angel to preach it after the apoſtaſy, ſends it thus to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people: read Rev. xiv. 6, 7. and conſider ſeriouſly, and ſpurn not againſt the way of God's preaching his everlaſting truth, wherein is wrapped up the eternal ſalvation and happineſs of mankind; yea, more eſpecially of this age, who ought to bow to God in this his way of diſpenſing his truth, which he himſelf hath choſen.

Now, conſider this one thing; was ever the goſpel thus preached before this age? The ſame goſpel was preached from the beginning; but was it ever thus preached before? "The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe "the Serpent's head;" ſo it was preached to Adam: "In thy ſeed ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed;" ſo it was preached to Abraham: "To us "a child is born, to us a Son is given," &c. ſo it was preached in the days of the prophets: "By this man, "every one that believeth in his name, ſhall receive "remiſſion of ſins." So it was preached in the apoſtles days.

And in the reformation from popery, ſome of the doctrines about *free juſtification by grace*, and of *remiſſion of ſins by faith in Chriſt*, &c. were revived; but was it ever preached thus before our age? Did perſons ever come forth in the power and authority of God, bidding men fear him, and be ſenſible of the hour of his judgment, even of his mighty day which was at hand; and come out of all falſe ways and worſhips, into the worſhip of him who made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and fountains of waters? I ſay, did perſons ever come forth thus, and preach the everlaſting goſpel thus, preach theſe doctrines to men, as the goſpel of God, before this day? And let men well conſider, whether it be not indeed of God, and by his command and power thus preached; and take heed of oppoſing

oppoſing his meſſage, leſt they be found fighters againſt him.

For mind: was not this always the ſum and ſubſtance in every diſpenſation? Could men be ſaved by believing that the "ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe "the ſerpent's head?" Or that in "Abraham's ſeed "all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed?" Or, "that a child ſhould be born, and a Son given?" Or that, "through Chriſt's name, remiſſion of ſins was "to be had," &c.? without coming into the true fear, which teacheth and cauſeth to depart from evil; and without giving glory to God, in bowing to his Spirit's inſtructions and teachings; and without worſhipping him, who made heaven and earth, and ſea, and fountains of waters? Or could any fear the Lord, and give glory to him, and come under the hour of his judgment, and worſhip him, who made heaven, and earth, and ſea, and fountains of waters; but they muſt firſt feel the power of the goſpel overcoming their ſpirits, and leading them thither?

X.

Two Queſtions anſwered; one concerning others not learning what God teacheth us; the other concerning the Way of his Teaching us.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is the reaſon that others cannot learn, nor become ſubject to the ſame ſpiritual truths, which God makes manifeſt to us, and ſubjecteth our ſpirits to?*

Anſw. The reaſon is, becauſe they do not learn the ſame way that God teacheth us; and ſo, though they have many advantages above us of parts, learning, &c. and ſtudy hard to know much; yet not coming into the right way, wherein God's Spirit teacheth, they never come to learn the truth, as it is there taught.

Queſt. 2. *But what is the way wherein God teacheth you?* may ſome ſay.

Anſw.

Anſw. Thus God teacheth us, by giving us an underſtanding to know him that is true, and by opening an ear in us to hear his voice; and ſo, being kept within the limits of that underſtanding and ear, we come to hear and know aright.

"Take heed" (ſaid Chriſt) "how ye hear." Oh! the Lord hath made us ſenſible of the weight of that ſcripture; and we have often experienced, that it is eaſy to hear amiſs, and read amiſs, and pray amiſs, and believe amiſs, and hope amiſs; but hard to do any of theſe aright. Therefore, we are taught ſtill to wait for the ſtirring of the waters, for the moving of God's Holy Spirit upon our ſpirits; and then healing virtue and ability is felt and received from him, to perform what he requires.

Thus, when we read the ſcriptures, our eyes are towards him, and we watch againſt our own underſtandings, againſt what they could gather or comprehend of themſelves, and wait to feel how he will open our ſpirits, and what he will make manifeſt to them, being opened; and if he drop down nothing, we gather nothing; but if he give light, then in his light we ſee and receive light. So in praying, we wait to feel the birth of life (which is of the Father, and which the Father hears) breathe in us; and ſo far as the Spirit of the Father breathes upon it, and it breathes to the Father, ſo far we pray; and when life ſtops, we ſtop, and dare not offer to God any ſacrifice of our own, but what the Father prepares and gives us. So in eating and drinking, and whatever we do, our heart is retired to the Lord, and we wait to feel every thing ſanctified by his preſence and bleſſing; and, indeed, here every thing is ſweet unto us. And in whatever God enables us to do, we narrowly watch to that direction of Chriſt, "not to let the left hand know "what the right hand doth." For we are nothing of ourſelves, nor can do any thing of ourſelves; therefore whatever is done in us, as we feel the grace of God, the virtue and power of his life working all in

us;

us; ſo it is ſtill given us to attribute all the honour and glory thereto.

And in this temper of ſpirit we find nothing too hard for us; for the ſtrength of Chriſt is ſtill at hand, even in the midſt of our weakneſs; and the riches of the kingdom is ſtill at hand in the midſt of our poverty and nothingneſs; and his ſtrength works, and our weakneſs doth not hinder the glory of him that works through it. So being beaten to it, by conſtant ſenſe and daily experience, that it is not by our willing or running, according to our wiſdom and ſtrength, that we can attain any thing; but by God's ſhewing mercy to us in Chriſt; we therefore daily wait at the poſts of God's heavenly wiſdom, to feel the gate of mercy and tender love opened to us, and mercy and love flow in upon us; whereby we may, and daily do, obtain what our hearts deſire and ſeek after, bleſſed be the Lord for ever.

And truly here in the ſpringings of love, and openings of mercy from our God, we have fellowſhip and converſe with the Father and Son, and one with another, in the holy Spirit of life; and we teſtify of theſe things to others, that they alſo might come into the ſame fellowſhip, and be of the ſame faith which flows from, and abides in, and makes living, in the power and life eternal.

The Lord guide all tender, breathing, panting ſpirits hither, that they may be ſatisfied in the goodneſs and loving-kindneſs of the Lord, and may eat abundantly of the fatneſs of his houſe, and drink of the rivers of his pleaſures, and not wander up and down any longer in their own barren thoughts, apprehenſions, and conceivings upon the ſcriptures.

XI.

Of the threefold Appearance of Chriſt; to wit, under the Law, in a Body of Fleſh, and in his Spirit and Power.

FIRST, *Under the law.* Various were the appearances of Chriſt; ſometimes as an angel, in the likeneſs of a man; ſo to Abraham, and ſo to Jacob, when Jacob wreſtled with him, and prevailed, and had overcome; ſo to Joſhua, or the captain of the Lord's hoſt, at his beſieging Jericho; ſo to Moſes in the buſh, he appeared as an angel, Acts vii. 35. ſo likewiſe in viſions. Thoſe glorious appearances of God to the prophets in viſions, were the appearances of Chriſt; as particularly, that glorious appearance of God ſitting upon a throne, and in his train filling the temple, and the Seraphims crying, "Holy! holy! "holy is the Lord of hoſts; his glory is the fulneſs "of the whole earth!" Iſa. vi. This was an appearance of Chriſt to Iſaiah, as is manifeſt, John xii. 41. where the Evangeliſt (relating to that place) uſeth this expreſſion: "Theſe things," (ſaid Iſaiah) when "he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him." So he was the angel of God's preſence, which went before the Jews, in all their journeyings and travels out of Egypt, through the ſea, and in the wilderneſs, and in the time of the Judges; and wrought all their deliverances for them, as is ſignified, Iſa. lxiii. 9. "In all their "afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his "preſence ſaved them," &c. So with the three children, he appeared in the midſt of the fiery furnace "in a form like the Son of God," as Nebuchadnezzar judged, Dan. iii. 25.

Now indeed the whole law was a ſhadow of him, who was to come to be the ſubſtance of it, and to perform that inwardly in the hearts of his, which the law figured forth, and repreſented outwardly. Thus Moſes and all the prophets were forerunners of him, the great prophet of the ſpiritual Iſrael of God. All the

the prieſts, eſpecially the high-prieſts, were types and forerunners of him, and to end in him, who is the high-prieſt over the houſhold of God for ever. The judges and ſaviours were types of him, the great Saviour and Redeemer: for they ſaved not by their own ſtrength, but by his Spirit and power coming upon them; ſo that the yoke (which was made and brought upon them by their rebellion againſt the Lord, and diſobedience to his law) was ſtill broken, becauſe of the anointing.

David, Solomon, and the good kings, were types of him. David, of his conqueſt over his ſpiritual enemies; Solomon, of his ruling his Iſrael in peace, after he had conquered their enemies.

Circumciſion was a type of his circumciſing the heart, that his children (his holy ſeed) might love the Lord their God with all their heart, and live.

The paſſover, and blood of the lamb, was a type of his blood, and ſprinkled upon the conſcience, which preſerveth againſt the ſtroke and power of the deſtroyer; and ſo God paſſeth over all ſuch, when he viſits for ſin and tranſgreſſion.

The outward ſabbath was a type of the pure reſt, which Chriſt gives to thoſe that believe in his name: for indeed they that truly believe in him do enter into reſt, and ceaſe from their own labour and workings of themſelves, and witneſs God's working in them, "both to will and to do of his good pleaſure."

The outward law, in the letter, written in tables of ſtone, was a ſhadow of the inward, living, pure, powerful, ſpiritual law of love and life, which God writes in the hearts of his children, which conſtrains them to obedience, and enables them to do all that God requires of them with eaſe and delight. For truly the yoke of his law is eaſy, and the burden of his commandments is light; ſo that they are not at all grievous to them that are under, and in ſubjection to, his Spirit.

When the mind is gathered, and brought from under the ſpirit and power of darkneſs into his Spirit and

and power, oh! how eaſy is it to believe, to love, to obey, &c.? Indeed there is nothing but love, and faith, and obedience, and life, and righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and pure power, and peace, and joy here. "For the old things are paſſed away, and all things "are become new in Chriſt," to them that are in the new creation in him.

So Canaan, the Holy Land, repreſented the land of life, or country of life, into which God gathers, and in which he feeds and preſerves all the living, whom he gathers out of the territories of death and darkneſs. And the plenty and fulneſs of the land of Canaan, and the ſweet rivers therein, ſignified the abundance of rich things, and the rivers of God's pleaſure, whereof his redeemed-ones drink, as they come to live, and dwell, and walk, and ſup in and with him.

Jeruſalem, the holy city, was a figure of the new Jeruſalem, the ſpiritual Jeruſalem, the heavenly Jeruſalem, which is the mother of all them that are born of the Spirit; and the hill whereon Jeruſalem was built, ſignified God's holy mountain, whereon this his city is built; and the inhabitants of the outward Jeruſalem ſignified the inhabiters of the new and inward Jeruſalem; and the temple ſignified Chriſt's body, and the bodies of the ſaints, which are temples, which the Holy One dwells in the midſt of. And that altar in the outward temple ſignified the altar in this inward temple, which all the true, inward, ſpiritual Jews have right to partake of, and none elſe. The fire in the outward temple, and the candleſticks, and the lights which were never to go out, ſignified the holy fire in the ſpiritual temple, which comes from heaven, wherewith all the ſpiritual ſacrifices are to be offered up; and the candleſtick is to hold the light (and the prieſts to keep the lamps burning) or God will remove it out of its place. So the holy garments of the prieſts ſignified the robes of righteouſneſs, innocency, and purity, wherewith the people of God under the goſpel (who are a royal prieſthood to him) are to be clothed.

And

And the ark ſignified that which holds the law of the new covenant; and the pot of manna, with which kind of food God fed and nouriſhed the ſoul in the wilderneſs, before he brought it into the Holy Land, muſt be for an everlaſting memorial in the land of the living. For indeed Chriſt appeared to, and was with that people in the wilderneſs, in a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; which ſignified the leading of God's Spirit in the day of the goſpel, Iſa. iv. 5. And he was the rock that followed them; and he was the manna of which they did eat, and the water of which they did drink; for they did eat and drink of the heavenly things in a figure, and (as their ſpirits were at any time opened) had a taſte and ſenſe of the true food, in and through the figure; yea, doubtleſs, at ſome times, they had all ſome ſenſe, and did all eat of the ſame ſpiritual meat as we now eat of, "and "did all drink of the ſame ſpiritual drink" as we now drink of, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. for they were not only all under the cloud, and did not only all paſs through the ſea, but they were alſo all baptized in the cloud and in the ſea, having a ſenſe of the pure power of the Lord, and of his outſtretched arm made bare for them; in which ſenſe they ſang his praiſe, though they ſoon afterwards forgot his works, Pſal. cvi. 11, 12. So likewiſe there was Aaron's rod, that budded, laid up in the ark; which is the evidence of true prieſthood and miniſtry for ever; and that which is ſo, is not to be ſpurned againſt, but ſtill to be acknowledged and honoured, as of God.

In it alſo were the tables of the law, in the repreſentative ark; in the true ark are the tables of the law of life, which God writes by the finger of his Spirit, and appoints to be kept in the ſpiritual ark for ever.

Above the ark was the mercy-ſeat, with two cherubims of glory, one at each end of it, ſpreading their wings on high over the mercy-ſeat, between whom God dwelt or ſat, where God met with and communed with Moſes, and the prieſts under the law, when they came to worſhip him, and enquire of him; which

figured out the true mercy-ſeat under the goſpel, where the true prieſts (the true circumciſion of the ſpiritual Iſrael of God) have acceſs with boldneſs to the throne of grace, that (through the high-prieſt of their profeſſion) they may obtain mercy and grace, to help in time of need.

So under the law, all the ſacrifices (the ſin-offering, the peace-offering, the thank-offering, the heave-offering, the wave-offering, the whole burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the drink-offering, &c.) ſignified Chriſt, the one offering, who comprehends them all; and the holy, ſpiritual, heavenly offerings, which the ſpiritual people (the prieſts of the goſpel) are daily to offer up to God: and the ſweet ſpices, frankincenſe, and odours, ſignified the ſweet ſeaſonings of the goſpel ſacrifices with grace, with ſalt, with the Spirit, with the freſh breathings of life, with innocency, with meekneſs, with tenderneſs, with zeal, with faith, with love, &c. which yields a moſt pleaſant ſcent in the noſtrils of the Lord.

Now in the bullock and goat for the ſin-offering, the blood was to be brought into the holy place, to make atonement; and the fat and inwards burnt on the altar; and the fleſh, ſkin, and dung, carried forth and burnt without the camp. What means this? Oh! how precious is it to read the figures of the heavenly things with true underſtanding! but to read through the figures (with the eye of life, with the eye of the Spirit) into the inviſible ſubſtance, this is ſweet, precious, and heavenly indeed!

Secondly, *Concerning Chriſt's appearance in a body of fleſh.* When the time of theſe ſhadows drew towards an end, and the fullneſs of time was come, he who thus appeared in ſeveral types and ſhadows among that people of the Jews under the law, he now came down from the Father, debaſed himſelf, and clothed himſelf like a man, partaking of fleſh and blood; and was in all things made like unto us (excepting ſin; for he was the Lamb without ſpot) humbling himſelf to come under the law, and under the curſe, that he might redeem

deem thoſe that are under the law (and under the curſe) by fulfilling the righteouſneſs thereof, and bringing them through into the righteouſneſs everlaſting.

Now while he was in the body, his glory did ſhine to the eye of the children of the true wiſdom: his diſciples (to whom not fleſh and blood, nor the wiſdom and knowledge which they could get from the letter, but his Father revealed him) they ſaw the hidden glory; they ſaw through the veil of his fleſh, and beheld him as the only begotten of his Father, full of grace and truth.

Now in this body he finiſhed the work which his Father gave him to do; he fulfilled all righteouſneſs (the righteouſneſs of the letter, the righteouſneſs of the Spirit) that he might bring *his* through the righteouſneſs of the law or letter, into the righteouſneſs of the Spirit and power, into the righteouſneſs of the new life; and here that ſcripture is read and fulfilled, "*I through the law am dead to the law, that I might* "*live to God.*" So his whole life was a doing the will of the Father, which ſent him.

When he was but twelve years old, he diſputed with the doctors and teachers of the law, hearing and aſking them queſtions (diſcovering the pure wiſdom of the Father which dwelt in him) becauſe it was his Father's buſineſs which he was to be about, as he told his mother, Luke ii. 49. And when the Lord led him into the wilderneſs to be tried, he went and was tempted, that he might fight the battle againſt his great adverſary. And when the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, moving him to preach the goſpel, he preached the goſpel in the Spirit and power of the Father, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil, as his Father's Spirit led and guided him: for he did nothing of himſelf, or in his own will, or for himſelf; but all in the will and time of the Father.

"*Mine hour is not yet come,*" ſaid he to his mother, when ſhe was haſty to have him do that miracle of turning water into wine, John ii. 4. And ſo when his

brethren urged him to go up to the feaſt, John vii. 3, 4. "My time," ſaid he, "is not yet come; your time "is always ready," ver. 5.

Thus he did always pleaſe his Father, and ſeek the honour of him that ſent him; and was obedient to death, even the death of the croſs, being willing to drink of the cup which his Father gave him to drink; and ſo having finiſhed his work, he returned from whence he came, and ſat down at the right-hand of the majeſty on high, being exalted above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, both in this world, and in that which is to come.

Thirdly, Now the third appearance of Chriſt, which theſe two outward appearances made way for, was his appearance *in Spirit*, even his pure, *inward, heavenly* appearance in the hearts of his children. This he bids his diſciples wait for; telling them, "that he would "not leave them comfortleſs, but would come again "to them." They had had the appearance of the bridegroom in the fleſh, and he was to go away. It could not be helped; it was neceſſary for them that he ſhould go away; but (ſaith he) "I will come again." The ſame power and preſence that is now with you in a body of fleſh, ſhall viſit you in Spirit, and ſo abide with you for ever. For he that is now with you ſhall be in you; till that time ye ſhall have ſorrow, and be like a travailing woman; but the world, in the mean time, ſhall rejoice; "but I will ſee you again, and "your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy no man takes "from you." And was it not ſo? Did not Chriſt ſend the Spirit, the Comforter? Did he not come in the Spirit and power of the Moſt High, to be with them always to the *end of the world?* Did he not bid them "ſtay and wait at Jeruſalem" for that appearance of him in his Spirit, and not go about his work and meſſage till he came in the power and authority of his Father to go along with them? And did not their hearts rejoice when he came with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory? Had they not then the joy and peace which paſſed all the underſtanding of man; which

joy

joy and peace none could take from them; which joy they were not promiſed that they ſhould receive till he came and ſaw them again? Yea, truly; in the kingdom, Spirit, and power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt there is a *ſeeing eye to eye.* Yea, it was ſo, in ſome meaſure, with ſome precious ones in the days of old, which that promiſe, (Pſal. xxxii. 8. "I will guide thee with mine "eye") intimates; for the eye of the ſoul muſt be upon God's eye, and obſerve the motion thereof, if it be guided thereby.

And truly this adminiſtration of the Spirit and power of the goſpel is exceeding glorious, and they that come into it, come into the glory and heavenly dominion and authority of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (and ſo are made kings by him, and wear crowns in his preſence, though they ſtill caſt them at his feet) and are changed from glory to glory; and behold, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, which none can do but with the eye which is in ſome meaſure changed and glorified.

Now this diſpenſation of the goſpel in Spirit and power, began in the apoſtles days, and the church was exceeding chaſte, pure, and beautiful then, without ſpot or wrinkle; though there were ſome crept into the outward court, which were ſpots among them; but that did not mar the beauty of the reſt, but they could bring victory and dominion to him that ſat on the throne, and witneſſed that ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt was come. For the man-child was born, and was among them; and the glorious woman (the church, the ſpouſe of Chriſt) "was clothed with the ſun," &c. and had both her huſband (her Lord and head) and the man-child (the pure birth of life) with her. But there was a falling away after this, and a thick dark night, and a very great and univerſal apoſtaſy from the Spirit and power of the apoſtles; many departing out of the fear into the high-mindedneſs, and not keeping their ſtanding in the faith, and love, and obedience of the truth; but holding a form of godlineſs out of the power.

But God, in his tender mercies, determined to ſend an angel to preach his everlaſting goſpel again; and in due time ſo did, as is expreſſed, Rev. xiv. 6, 7. (Mark: none could preach the everlaſting goſpel after the apoſtaſy, by any ordination or ſucceſſion of miniſtry left amongſt men; but there muſt be a new receiving of the goſpel, by a new meſſage and commiſſion from on high). And God likewiſe ſent forth his Spirit of judgment and burning to conſume the whore (the falſe church) which was grown very great, ſitting over peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues; and to bring the true church out of the wilderneſs into enjoyment of her beauty and glory again. And when ſhe comes again, ſhe comes as a morning without clouds, without any veil, without any outward types or ſhadows of the glory to be revealed, even in the pure and heavenly glory itſelf.

He that hath a true eye, let him read this; and he that hath an heart opened by the Lord, let him acknowledge it: for the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is exalted, and the knees of his redeemed ones bow to him, and acknowledge him the only Anointed One, the only Lord and King over all, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

XII.

Concerning Mount Sinai, *and* Mount Sion.

WAS not Sinai the mount that might be touched, an earthly mount, from whence was the miniſtration of the law outward, or in the letter, which gendered to bondage, condemnation, and death? Doth not the apoſtle Peter ſay, concerning the law as ſo adminiſtered, "that it was a yoke too heavy for "them or their fathers to bear?" Acts xv. 10.

Is not the goſpel Sion a ſpiritual mount, an heavenly mount, a mount that cannot be touched by human ſenſes, a mount from whence is the miniſtration

tion of the Spirit, the miniſtration of liberty, the miniſtration of life, the miniſtration of the glory that excelleth? Is it not the holy mountain, whereon the holy city (the New Jeruſalem) is built, and where the King of Righteouſneſs rules in righteouſneſs and peace over all his ſubjects; where he makes to them the feaſt of fat things, and of wines on the lees well refined; where *he* and *his* ſup together, eating and drinking the bread and wine of the kingdom, even the living bread, and the fruit of the living vine?

Is not the whole miniſtration of life, from the beginning to end, from Mount Sion? Is it, any of it, from Mount Sinai?

Is not Sion to be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteouſneſs? Doth either the judgment or the righteouſneſs, wherewith Sion and her converts are to be redeemed, come from Mount Sinai? Do they not both come from Mount Sion?

Out of "Sion ſhall go forth the law, and word of "the Lord from Jeruſalem," Iſai. ii. He that underſtandeth this ſcripture, knoweth the goſpel ſtate.

"Ye are not come (ſaid the apoſtle) to the mount "that might be touched, and that burned with fire; "nor unto blackneſs, and darkneſs, and tempeſt, and "the ſound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, "&c. but ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the "city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem," &c. Heb. xii.

Now they that come thither, they witneſs the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, which maketh free from the law of ſin and death; and the pure word of eternal life iſſuing thence, even from that Sion and Jeruſalem.

Mind that ſcripture, Gal. iv. 25, 26. "For this "Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and anſwereth to "Jeruſalem, which now is, and is in bondage, with "her children; but Jeruſalem which is above is free, "which is the mother of us all."

We read, Rev. xi. 19. "That the temple of God "was opened in heaven, and there was ſeen in his

" temple the ark of his teſtament; and there were " lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an " earthquake, and great hail." Whence did thoſe lightnings, voices, thunderings, &c. iſſue; out of Sinai, or out of Sion? Doth not the lion of the tribe of Judah roar out of Sion againſt his enemies, and ſhoot the arrows of his judgments from thence? And if he judge his enemies from thence, doth he not judge his people from thence alſo? Is not his fire in Sion, and his furnace in Jeruſalem? And doth not the Spirit of judgment and burning (by which he waſheth and purgeth away the blood and filth of the daughter of Sion) iſſue forth from thence? Oh! that men had a true and ſpiritual underſtanding of theſe things, and were taught of God to know and diſtinguiſh concerning the things of his kingdom!

XIII.

Of the Signification of Mount Sinai, *and* Mount Sion.

MOUNT Sinai was that mount of earth which the voice and preſence of the Lord ſhook at the miniſtration of the law outward.

Now there is an inward earth, which is to be ſhaken alſo; even the nature which tranſgreſſed, the nature which was ſubject to ſin, and under the curſe, the earth which brings forth briars and thorns. Into the earth the plough of the Lord is to go, to break it up, and overturn it, that there may be a new earth formed, fit to receive the heavenly ſeed; out of which it may ſpring, and bring forth fruit to God. Yea, not only the earth, but alſo the heavens, are to be ſhaken, yea, and removed too; though the ſhaking of Mount Sinai did not ſignify that, but only the ſhaking of the earth. " But yet once more" (ſaith the Lord) " I ſhake " not earth only, but alſo heaven;" which ſignifieth the removing thoſe things that may be ſhaken, that thoſe things which cannot be ſhaken may remain.

There is that which is changeable, and there is that which is unchangeable. The old earth, and the old heavens,

heavens, are changeable; the new heavens, and the new earth, are unchangeable. There is a changeable mind, a changeable ſpirit, a changeable nature, a changeable will, a changeable wiſdom, a changeable reaſon and underſtanding (which one while goeth this way, and another while that way) a changeable knowledge of God; which man learns not of the Spirit of the Lord, but after a traditional way, and by the ſearch of his own hunting mind, and drinks into that part which is old and earthly. There is man's kindling a fire there, a beating out ſparks there, with which he compaſſes about and warmeth himſelf, getting unto himſelf peace and joy, hope and confidence, &c. But when the Lord appears, and his voice is heard (when he ariſeth to ſhake terribly the earth, yea, and the heavens alſo) all theſe will be ſhaken, and fall like untimely figs at the ruſhing of a mighty wind and terrible tempeſt.

For the day of the Lord, the day of his pure appearance, the day of the brightneſs of his riſing, will be upon all that is high and lofty; upon all that is proud and lifted up above the pure ſeed. Every cedar of Lebanon, and oak of Baſhan, that is high and lifted up; every high mountain and hill that are lifted up; every high tower, and fenced wall; every ſhip of Tarſhiſh, and pleaſant picture, &c. ſhall all feel the terror of his majeſty: and that alone which is of the pure ſeed, gathered into the ſeed, and changed into the nature of the ſeed, that alone ſhall ſtand. Nothing elſe ſhall be able to dwell with the devouring fire, and everlaſting burnings: ſo that it may be very well ſaid, "Who may abide the day of his coming; "and who ſhall ſtand when he appeareth?" For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's ſoap; and he cometh with his fan in his hand, to fan away the chaff; and ſhall ſit as a refiner and purifier of ſilver, to purify the ſons of Levi, and purge them as gold and ſilver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteouſneſs, pleaſant to the Lord; which none can do but thoſe that are purified by him.

And

And happy will they be, whoſe religion and worſhip in that day will ſtand the trial, and bear the fire. And, oh! bleſſed for ever be the Lord, who is come near to judgment, and is a ſwift witneſs againſt all deceit and unrighteouſneſs; but a juſtifier of them whoſe conſciences he has ſprinkled with the blood of Jeſus.

But now, as the Lord taketh away the old, ſo he bringeth in the new. As he removeth the old earth and the old heavens, wherein dwelt unrighteouſneſs; ſo he formeth and bringeth forth the new heavens, and the new earth, wherein dwells righteouſneſs.

And here the kingdom is known and received, which can never be ſhaken. Here is the Mount Sion, which ſhall never be removed; and the Jeruſalem, one of whoſe ſtakes or cords ſhall never be plucked up, or broken. Here is the city which hath everlaſting foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God.

Bleſſed are they that come hither, and dwell here; who are not come to the mount that may be touched and ſhaken, and removed (read inwardly); but to the holy mount of God, and whereon all the buildings of life are raiſed, and whereon they ſtand firm for ever.

And all that are herein built up and eſtabliſhed can truly ſay, and ſing in ſpirit, "Bleſſed be the Lord "God of Iſrael, and bleſſed by him ſhall be the "habitation of juſtice, and mountain of holineſs, "from this time forth for evermore." For Jeruſalem is now become a quiet habitation, and the king of glory reigneth therein: for the Lord of Hoſts, who hath created the new heavens, and the new earth, hath created Jeruſalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; and they ſhall be glad, and rejoice, and bleſs themſelves in him, for ever and ever. Amen, Amen.

XIV.

XIV.

Concerning the Temple and Sacrifices under the Goſpel.

GOD's temple under the goſpel is the light of his Son, the Spirit of his Son, and thoſe ſouls which are renewed, and built up an habitation for him in the Spirit of his Son, and thoſe bodies in which renewed minds and ſpirits dwell. God is light, and he dwelleth in light; God is Spirit, and his building is holy and ſpiritual; for he dwelleth in nothing that is dark, or corrupt, or unclean.

And that which is ſacrificed or offered up to God muſt be clean and pure. No unclean thought, no unclean deſire, nothing that is earthly, or fleſhly, or ſelfiſh, muſt be offered up to God; but the pure breathings of his own Spirit: for whatſoever is of him, and comes from him, is accepted with him; but whatever man can invent, or form, or offer up of his own, or of himſelf (though it be ever ſo glorious and taking in man's eye), yet it is but abomination in the ſight of the Lord.

Thus all the ſacrifices of the Gentiles (or heatheniſh nature) are rejected. Thus all the ſacrifices of the Jews outward (or of the profeſſing mind and nature, without the true life) are rejected alſo.

"Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord" (ſaid the prophet of the Lord of old) "and bow myſelf "before the high God? Shall I come before him with "burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will "the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, with "ten thouſands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firſt-"born for my tranſgreſſion; the fruit of my body for "the ſin of my ſoul?" Mic. vi. 6, 7.

What ſaith the anſwer of God? No, no; this is not the way to come to pardon of ſin, or to acceptance with the Lord; but come to that which teacheth what

is

is good, and what the "Lord requireth of thee, O "man; which is to do juſtly, and to love mercy, "and to walk humbly with the Lord." Come thither in the teachings of God's Spirit, and worſhip there, and there thou ſhalt witneſs the forgiveneſs of ſins, and acceptance with the Lord, Mic. vi. 7, 8. and Iſai. i. 16, 17, 18. For it was not offering ſacrifices of old (appointed under the law) that would do the thing, nor mens pleading the ſacrifice under the goſpel; but coming to that Spirit which teacheth holineſs, and being ſubject to that Spirit, and offering in that Spirit (to the Father) what proceeds therefrom. So that his building in the Spirit is the only temple, and the ſacrifices or offerings in the Spirit are the only offerings of the New Teſtament.

And here every groan or ſigh towards the Lord after that which is pure, every ſupplication in the Spirit, every acknowledgment of the goodneſs of the Lord in a true and pure ſenſe, are of a ſweet ſavour in the noſtrils of the Lord: yea, uſing hoſpitality, relieving the poor, or doing any thing that is good from the good and holy root, are ſacrifices acceptable to the Lord. Read theſe ſcriptures following (and if the Lord open thine eyes, thou mayeſt thereby come to ſee both what the temple and ſacrifices are), 1 Cor. iii. 16, and 2 Cor. vi. 16. Iſai. x. 7. 15. Epheſ. ii. 21, 22. Heb. iii. 6. Rev. xxi. 22. John iv. 23. Pſal. xc. 1. Theſe places foregoing are for the temple: then for the ſacrifices, Pſal. l. 14, 15. and li. 16, 17. and cxli. 2. Mal. i. 11. Heb. x. 8, 9. Rom. xii. 1. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Heb. xiii. 15. Phil. iv. 18.

XV.

XV.

Some Queſtions concerning the Light of CHRIST's *Spirit anſwered, according to the Teſtimony of the Scriptures of Truth, and according to Experience.*

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is the meſſage which Chriſt ſent his apoſtles to declare, whom he ſent to preach the goſpel?*

Anſw. This is the meſſage which they heard of him, and which they declared unto others, "That God is "light, and in him is no darkneſs at all."

Queſt. 2. *What was Chriſt's intent in ſending them with this meſſage; and for what end were they to declare it to others?*

Anſw. For the opening of mens eyes and hearts, that men might come to a ſight and ſenſe of the darkneſs, and to a ſight and ſenſe of the light; and might be turned from darkneſs to light (and ſo from Satan's power to God); and might come out of the one into the other (that is, out of the darkneſs into the light), and ſo might walk in the light, as God is in the light.

Queſt. 3. *What is the danger of abiding in darkneſs?*

Anſw. In the darkneſs is ſin, death, condemnation, and deſtruction of the ſoul, and ſeparation from God and Chriſt for ever.

Queſt. 4. *What is the benefit of being turned to the light, and of coming into the light, and walking in the light, as God is in the light?*

Anſw. The benefits are great and many; three whereof I may now mention, which comprehend and contain in them many more.

Firſt, In the light, remiſſion of ſins is received; for there is the blood of ſprinkling, wherewith thoſe are ſprinkled that come thither; and indeed none can walk and abide there, but they come to witneſs the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, God's Son, cleanſing them from all ſin; and true, real cleanſing is no where elſe witneſſed.

Secondly,

Secondly, They have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, and come alſo into fellowſhip with the ſaints in light; which are great myſteries, and none knows what they mean but ſuch as are in that holy fellowſhip.

Thirdly, They there receive the earneſt of the everlaſting inheritance, and the ſealing up by God's Holy Spirit unto the day of full redemption.

Queſt. 5. *Where is the darkneſs which men are to be turned from?*

Anſw. It is within, chiefly within; there is Satan's kingdom; there is the houſe, which the "ſtrong man "armed" keepeth; where his goods are in peace, till a "ſtronger" than he cometh to trouble and diſpoſſeſs him.

Queſt. 6. *How or where is the light to be met with which man is to be turned to?*

Anſw. It appears within alſo; it ſhines in the darkneſs: for thither Chriſt (the ſtronger) comes, with the light of his Spirit, to overcome and diſpoſſeſs the ſtrong man of his houſe and kingdom.

Queſt. 7. *When doth the light of Chriſt's Spirit ſhine in the darkneſs of man's heart?*

Anſw. When, and as God pleaſeth. For the light is his, and he cauſeth it to ſhine (in the hearts of the ſons and daughters of men) according to his pleaſure; and therefore men are to wait for the ſhining of his pure heavenly light in their hearts, that with it the darkneſs may be reſiſted, overcome, and ſubdued in them, and ſcattered and diſpelled from them, and their hearts filled with the light and power of life.

Queſt. 8. *How may a man perceive or know the light when it ſhines?*

Anſw. By its ſhining: for light (both outward and inward) manifeſts both itſelf and other things by its own ſhining. And as there is no diſcerning the things of this world but by the light of the world; ſo there is no diſcerning the things of the other world but by the light of the other world; that is, there is no diſcerning ſpiritual things, but by the light and Spirit of our Lord

Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which God cauſeth to ſhine in the heart; which light ſearcheth the heart, and trieth the reins, and diſcovereth the moſt hidden things there.

Object. *But the heart is deceitful above all things, and Satan can transform himſelf into the likeneſs of an angel of light; ſo that he ſhines inwardly too by his feigned appearances: how then may I know the ſhinings of the true light of Chriſt's Spirit in my heart, from his falſe ſhinings and transformings?*

Anſw. God hath a witneſs in mens conſciences: for as God hath not left himſelf without witneſs outwardly, but all his works teſtify of him (his works of goodneſs, love, mercy, power, &c. teſtify of his goodneſs, love, mercy, power, &c.); ſo he hath not left himſelf without witneſs inwardly; but there is ſomewhat in men to teſtify of God, and for God, and againſt his enemy, and all deceitful appearances; which witneſs always ſpeaketh faithfully, and teſtifieth truth.

Therefore he that cometh to diſcern that, and mind that, ſhall find that near him, which will always witneſs for God upon every occaſion, and againſt all the appearances and devices of the enemy.

Now no man can come to diſcern or diſtinguiſh in caſes of this nature, but as that which is of God, and for God, gives the judgment in him; and he that judgeth thus ſhall never judge according to the ſhews and appearances of things, but ſhall ſtill judge the true and righteous judgment.

Queſt. 9. *What is the nature and properties of the light of Chriſt's Spirit; and what will it do in the hearts of thoſe that turn to it, receive it, and walk in it?*

Anſw. It hath a moſt excellent nature and properties, and it will work wonderfully in the hearts of thoſe that receive it, and walk in it towards the redeeming and ſaving them from ſin, and the powers of darkneſs: ſo that following this light, and abiding and walking in it they cannot be overcome by the enemy of their ſouls; but muſt needs conquer and overcome him. To inſtance in ſome:

Firſt,

First, It hath an enlightening or manifesting property. It will discover all that is of God, and likewise all that is against him. It will discover the very mystery of death, and the most subtil workings of the enemy in the mystery of darkness, and deceivableness of unrighteousness. And it will discover the mystery of life, and the mystery of the way of holiness. So that not only the precepts of holiness, but the way of the precepts, the way of obeying the holy will and Spirit of God in every thing, is here learned.

Secondly, It hath an awakening property. This light will not let a man sleep in sin, or grow heavy and dull (if he hearken to it); but it awakens him that sleeps: and whoever is truly awakened at any time, is awakened by this light; by the shining thereof in his heart; by the manifestation of God to his spirit by it. This testimony Paul gives, Ephes. v. 13, 14. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Wherefore he saith, "Awake, thou that sleepest," &c.

Thirdly, It hath a quickening property. For it is the light of life, the light of Christ's Spirit, which is living and powerful; and it hath life and power in it, and quickeneth and raiseth the man to whom it reacheth, and giveth him ability to arise from the dead.

Fourthly, It hath a cleansing, a sanctifying, a purifying property. Oh! how clean it makes within! The light is pure, and it maketh pure. All the defilement and corruption is in the darkness; none of it is in the light; but the light purgeth it away, where it findeth entertainment.

Fifthly, It hath an uniting and separating property. It unites to God; it unites to that which is pure; and it separates from sin, Satan, darkness, and whatever is impure.

Sixthly, It hath a preserving nature and property. It preserves the man in whom it dwells; and where it hath power, and rules, it keeps out the darkness; so that darkness cannot break in where it hath place, and is kept to: nor can the mind break out from the Lord, which

which keeps in the ſenſe, ſavour, and ſeaſoning of the light of his Spirit.

Indeed time would fail me, to ſpeak of the excellent nature, virtues, and properties thereof; but come, taſte, and ſee how ſweet the light is, and what a pleaſant thing it is to behold the ſhinings of this Sun.

Queſt. 10. *Doth God viſit all men with this light?*

Anſw. Yes; as God loveth all men, and would have all men ſaved, ſo he viſiteth all men (more or leſs) with that which is able to diſcover the darkneſs to them, and to ſave them therefrom.

Queſt. 11. *What is the reaſon then that all men are not ſaved by it?*

Anſw. Becauſe they do not receive it, and join to it againſt the darkneſs; but join to the darkneſs, and hearken to the wiſdom and reaſonings thereof, againſt the appearances and diſcoveries of the light.

Queſt. 12. *How comes it that men do ſo?*

Anſw. From their love to the darkneſs, and to the deeds of darkneſs; which they know they ſhould not love, becauſe they have ſomewhat near them, which often ſhews them the evil, both of the darkneſs that is in them, and of the deeds that come from it. So that this is the condemnation, that men love the darkneſs, cleave to the darkneſs, and follow the darkneſs; but hate the light, and turn from the light, which in the love and mercy of God follows them, to bring them out of love with the darkneſs, and to bring them into the ſenſe of, and fellowſhip with him in, the light.

Queſt. 13. *How come ſome to love the light?*

Anſw. God affords a capacity therein to all, and God is love; and from the flowings of his love, and aboundings of his mercy to all, are men begotten to him; and the obedient are kept by him in ſubjection to that, which many reſiſting the ſtrivings of his Spirit with them, are finally given up to hardneſs of heart, who turn from and hate the light. So that to God and his grace is to be attributed the ſalvation of all that are ſaved; and to man, his own deſtruction and

periſhing from the way of life, notwithſtanding the tender viſitations of God, to recover and reconcile man to himſelf, through the blood of his Son.

Queſt. 14. *Againſt whom do they rebel, that rebel againſt the light?*

Anſw. They rebel againſt Chriſt, from whom the light comes; and will Chriſt ſave ſuch as rebel againſt him? Oh! that men did aright conſider this thing! for it is a greater matter to know, and be ſubject to the light of Chriſt's Spirit, as it ſhines from him in the heart, than men are aware of. Now that which diſcovers the hidden things of darkneſs in the heart, and reproves for it, is the light of Chriſt's Spirit, and not another. Oh! that all that deſire to know what and where the true light is, did underſtand ſo!

Queſt. 15. *What do they miſs of, who do not know nor heed the light of Chriſt's Spirit, nor mind the reproofs thereof in their hearts, but look on it as inferior in kind and nature to what it is?*

Anſw. They miſs of many great and precious privileges, which they that know it and have received it, and ſo walk in it, and are ſubject to it, do experience and are acquainted with.

Firſt, They miſs of knowing the ways of it: for in this light there are ways or paths of holineſs, paths of life, paths of righteouſneſs, paths of peace, paths of joy, paths of refreſhment and conſolation, wherein all theſe things are daily met with by thoſe that walk there; which they that know not the light (or rebel againſt the light) are not acquainted with. See Job xxiv. 13.

Secondly, They miſs of the lighting of their candle by it: for God lights his candle in the heart by this light, and by no other thing; ſo that in this his light, they whoſe candle is lighted by him, ſee light.

David had experience of this, and from that experience ſpake, "Thou wilt light my candle; the Lord "my God will enlighten my darkneſs, Pſal. xviii. 28. And Job had experience of this alſo, as thoſe words of his plainly ſignify, Job xxix. 2, &c. where he ſaith, "Oh!

" Oh! that I were as in the days paſt, when his can-
" dle ſhined upon my head, and by his light I walked
" through darkneſs." And all the children of God, who in this day wait for the ſhinings of the light of his Spirit in their hearts, and are ſubject to him therein, they experience the ſame, and know the Word of life (which is nigh in the mouth and heart) to be a " lantern to the feet, and a light to the paths," of the loweſt and meaneſt here.

Thirdly, They miſs of the ſending forth, or revelation of that from God, which leads to his holy hill and to his tabernacles, which David experienced and deſired more of, Pſal. xliii. 3. For " who ſhall dwell
" in God's holy hill, or abide in his tabernacle? Pſal. xv. 1. " He that walketh uprightly, and work-
" eth righteouſneſs, and ſpeaketh the truth in his
" heart, &c. he ſhall never be moved," ver. 2. to the end, and Iſai. xxxiii. 15, &c. But how ſhall any come thither? Surely by God's light and truth ſent forth from his Spirit into their ſpirits. This is the way of aſcending thither in all ages and generations.

Fourthly, They ſlight that meaſure of light given them, and deſpiſe the day of ſmall things, and therefore miſs of the pouring forth of God's Spirit upon them, which is plentifully poured forth upon the ſons and daughters of the ſpiritual and heavenly Jeruſalem, in this day of God's viſiting the earth again after the apoſtaſy; bleſſed be the name of the Lord! And how comes it to be poured forth upon them? How comes wiſdom to pour out her ſpirit unto them? Why, they hearken to her reproofs, turning thereat, and forſaking that which they are reproved for, and ſo come into wiſdom's fear; and then wiſdom opens her ſecrets, and pours out her ſpirit, and makes known her words to thoſe that are ſubject to her reproofs, and learn her fear, which is the fear of the New Covenant. See Prov. i. 23. He that receiveth the convincer of ſin, and followeth his leadings, out of the ſins he is convinced of (and into the paths of righteouſneſs and holineſs, into which he is the leader) cannot miſs of

the Comforter, or of his comforts; for he is one and the ſame with the convincer or reprover.

XVI.

The Way to know one's Election, and to be fully aſſured of it; as alſo concerning Election itſelf.

DAVID ſaith, "The Lord hath ſet apart him "that is godly for himſelf," Pſal. iv. This is God's choice. God is the great potter, who formeth veſſels upon the wheel of his power; ſome to honour, ſome to diſhonour; but not before they were. Some he melteth and tendereth for ſalvation, who hearken to his voice; others he hardeneth and giveth up for deſtruction, who rebel againſt his Spirit. Oh! how ſhould all fear before him, who hath power over them, as the potter over the clay, that they ſhould reverence and obey him, leſt his power break them to pieces!

Now this is moſt certain: the holy man, the righteous man, the godly man, he that is renewed in the ſpirit of his mind; this is a veſſel of honour, fitted and choſen by God unto honour: but he that is corrupt, dead, filthy, polluted, &c. this is the veſſel which God rejects. For the righteous God loveth righteouſneſs for ever, and the holy God loveth holineſs for ever; and he that is holy and righteous, is of him, and choſen by him: but all that is unholy and unrighteous, is of another nature and ſpirit, and ſo rejected and caſt out by his pure nature and Spirit.

Therefore every one that would be accepted of the Lord, and witneſs his choice, is to mind that, and be ſubject to that, whereby God fitteth veſſels for himſelf; which is the Holy Spirit, nature, and life of his Son, wherein every man is accepted (as he is called thither, gathered thither, and found there) and none rejected: but out of this every man is rejected, but none accepted; "for God is no reſpecter of perſons."

He

He carried himſelf equally to every Jew under the old covenant; and he carrieth himſelf equally towards all who obey the call of his Spirit into the new and living covenant; ſo that the truth ſtandeth for ever, that in every nation, tongue and people, he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him, and none elſe. And this is the great mercy and tender love of God to all men, that which bringeth into his fear, and teacheth and enableth to work righteouſneſs, is accepted of him, and none elſe. And this is the great mercy and tender love of God to all men, that which bringeth into his fear, and teacheth and enableth to work righteouſneſs, is near every man, which is the word of faith, the word of life, the word of power, the word of reconciliation; ſo that no man need go far to ſeek out ſalvation: for Chriſt, the Saviour and ſalvation of God, is nigh to every man, in the light of that holy ſpirit of truth wherewith God viſiteth mankind, and wherein he ſpeaketh peace and reconciliation, both to them that are nigh, and to them that are afar off, as they hear the voice of the Spirit of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and learn ſubjection to it.

"Give all diligence to make your calling and elec-
"tion ſure," ſaid the apoſtle Peter, 2 Pet. i. 10. How ſhall we do that, may ſome ſay? "Why, give
"all diligence to add to your faith virtue, and to
"virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance,
"and to temperance patience, and to patience godli-
"neſs, and to godlineſs brotherly kindneſs, and to
"brotherly kindneſs love: for if theſe things be in
"you and abound, ye cannot be barren in the know-
"ledge of Chriſt, but muſt needs be fruitful." Well, but what then? What if they be fruitful? Why, if they be fruitful, then (to be ſure) they are choſen branches; for God caſts off none but that which is dry, barren, dead, and unfruitful. Feel life, which is active and bears fruit, thou feeleſt the choice of God, thou anſwereſt the end of thy call, &c. and herein as thou comeſt to ſettlement and eſtabliſhment, thou wilt find thy calling and election made ſure to thee,

and an entrance miniſtered to thee abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. For Chriſt hath the key of the kingdom, and ſhutteth out no ſuch as theſe, but giveth them further admittance day by day. And ſo by this means thou wilt witneſs tranſlation further and further, out of the kingdom of darkneſs into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and an inheritance and poſſeſſion of life and glory in meaſure; which will be an earneſt to thee of the full inheritance in due time, and a ſeal upon thy heart unto the day of full redemption: yea, thou mayeſt then alſo come to ſee how thou waſt loved and choſen in Chriſt before the foundation of the world, through obedience unto, and ſanctification of the Spirit, manifeſted in time, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. (For known unto God are all his works from the beginning, before ever any of them were wrought). If thou feel that which cometh forth from the Lord to call and gather to him, and to renew and ſanctify, and make fit for him, and to make thee fruitful (from the holy root and power of life) in that which is good; this is enough for thee, and thy ſoul is ſafe and bleſſed here: for here thou knoweſt that, and art in that bleſſed ſeed of promiſe, into which all that are gathered and abide, are bleſſed in and with it.

Now as concerning election itſelf, obſerve this; that it is in Chriſt, and not out of him. For it was the intent of God to honour his Son, even as his Son honoured him: and this was the honour which God gave him, "That he ſhould be his ſalvation to the ends of the earth; that whoſoever believed on him, "ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life." That he ſhould be the way for all mankind to come to the Father, through faith in him; "that as in Adam all "died, ſo in Chriſt all might be made alive;" and as in Adam all men were ſhut up in death and condemnation, ſo the free gift might come upon all, and the way of life and redemption be opened to all, in him.

Mind

Mind the figure, the brazen ſerpent, which was not lifted up, that a certain number might be healed, and no more; but that every one that was wounded, every one that was ſtung with ſerpents, might look up and be healed.

So was Chriſt lifted up, that every ſinner that was ſtung with ſin and the ſerpent, might look up to the phyſician of ſouls, and receive virtue and healing from him, according to that precious ſcripture, "Look "unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth. "And whoever is athirſt, let him come; and whoever "will, let him come and drink of the water of life "freely." Yea, God ſtands ready, by his Holy Spirit and quickening power, which is near men, to kindle the true thirſt in them, and to make them truly willing. To open it yet further;

There is predeſtination, election, calling, juſtifying, glorifying: predeſtination unto holineſs, election in that which is holy, calling out of darkneſs into light, juſtifying and glorifying in the light, through the renewing and ſanctification of the Spirit. All theſe God ordereth and manageth according to his good will, and according as he hath purpoſed in himſelf; although he be not the decréer, nor author of ſin or rebellion againſt himſelf, which is the cauſe of the creature's condemnation.

Thus all things are as preſent with God before they were: for God did foreknow Adam's fall (though he was not therefore the author of it) before it came to paſs; and he foreknew how his power, and love, and mercy, ſhould work towards men and for men, in and through Chriſt; and how far he would viſit men therewith, and how far men would reſiſt and ſtrive againſt his holy and good Spirit; and he determined how long his Spirit ſhould ſtrive with nations and perſons: for with ſome he would long wait to be gracious; with others he would be quicker and more ſevere, according to their provocations.

Now his love, his mercy, his power, his good Spirit, are his own; and he may ſhew forth the opera-

tions of them towards men according to his pleaſure; and who may ſay unto him, What doſt thou? May he not do with his own what he pleaſeth (who is "good "and righteous in all his ways)?" and becauſe he may ſhew mercy as long as he will, and harden as ſoon as he will (as he ſees cauſe), may it not be truly ſaid, "That he hath mercy on whom he will have "mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth?" But that he hardeneth any, without firſt giving them a day of mercy, and viſitations of mercy, following them with mercy, and forbearing them in mercy, and ſo by the riches of his goodneſs, forbearance, and long-ſuffering, leading them to repentance, that they might eſcape his wrath, and the dread of his powerful vengeance, becauſe of ſin: I ſay, that God hardens any before he hath dealt thus with them, from a meer will in himſelf, becauſe he would deſtroy the moſt and far greateſt part of men; this the ſcriptures nowhere teſtify to, but abundantly teſtify againſt. For how long did God ſtrive with the old world, even to have ſaved them, whom afterwards he did deſtroy? And how did he ſtrive with that people of the Jews (yea, and with other nations alſo, though they might ſeem caſt off)? "As I live, ſaith the Lord" (and he ſpeaketh his heart), "I deſire not the death of the wicked, "but rather that they might return and live. I am "not the deſtroyer, I am the Saviour; and my delight "is not to deſtroy, but to ſave. O Iſrael! thy de-"ſtruction is of thyſelf; but in me is thy help." And no man's blood will lie at God's door, but at his own.

Therefore as God hath prepared a Saviour, ſo there is no want of love, or mercy, or power on his part, to draw men to their Saviour; but this is the condemnation, that men harden themſelves againſt the drawings of his Spirit, and againſt the operation of his holy light and power, when it appeareth, and is willing to work in and upon their hearts. This is not the condemnation of men, that light doth not ſhine in their hearts; but that they love the darkneſs more than

than the light, which appears and ſhines in them, and is there witneſſing againſt and drawing from the darkneſs. And ſo when it ſhall at laſt be made manifeſt, how light hath appeared to all men, and God's Spirit therein, and thereby ſtriven with all men, and how they have refuſed, and would not be turned from their darkneſs to the light of the Lord; every mouth will be ſtopped before him, and all men that periſh, juſtly condemned for refuſing and neglecting ſo great ſalvation: for the light of the ſun of God's everlaſting day, and the ſound of his Spirit of life, viſiting dark man, reacheth throughout all the earth, and his voice and words to the ends of the world.

XVII.

Some Obſervations concerning the Prieſthood of CHRIST, *from ſeveral Paſſages in the Epiſtle to the* HEBREWS.

Obſ. 1. WHO is the apoſtle and high prieſt of our profeſſion? It is Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, whom God hath appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds; and who is the expreſs image of his Father's ſubſtance, &c. Heb. i. and chap. iii. 1.

Obſ. 2. Why this high prieſt was to ſuffer death? which was, that he might taſte death for every man, and ſo through ſuffering become a perfect Saviour, or perfect Captain of ſalvation, to all the ſons that were to be brought by him to glory, chap. ii. 9, 10.

Obſ. 3. Why he partook of fleſh and blood? one reaſon whereof was, becauſe the children (and that therein he might ſhew them an example of righteouſneſs, that he might condemn himſelf in the fleſh), were partakers of fleſh and blood; for that was the very ground or reaſon that he took part of the ſame: another reaſon was that which was mentioned before; that he might taſte death, and through death deſtroy him

him who had the power of death, and ſo break open the priſon-doors, and deliver thoſe who were captives under him, chap. ii. 14, 15.

Obſ. 4. Why he was tempted; and why in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren? which was, "that he might be a merciful and faithful "high prieſt in things pertaining to God, to make "reconciliation for the ſins of the people." For his own ſuffering under temptations (even the ſenſe thereof) renders him merciful, tender, faithful, and ready to help and ſuccour his in all their temptations, chap. ii. 17, 18.

Mark; Chriſt was not only to die, and ſo offer up a ſacrifice of atonement, but he was alſo to make reconciliation by it ever afterwards for his children (in caſe of tranſgreſſion) whenever occaſion ſhould be. So ſaith John, "If any man ſin, we have an advocate "with the Father" (to plead for the forgiving and blotting out of the ſin); "and he is the propitiation "(or reconciliation) for our ſins;" as the old tranſlation renders it, 1 John ii. 1, 2.

Obſ. 5. Chriſt, our apoſtle and high prieſt, is as faithful over all his houſe, as Moſes was over his. There is not one of the children, not one of his family, but he will teach: not one ſoul belonging to him, but he will ſuccour, being tempted; nor any one, but he will be an advocate and reconciliation for (in caſe of ſin), in and according to the way that God hath appointed, Heb. iii. 2.

Obſ. 6. Who are Chriſt's houſe, over whom is he an apoſtle and high prieſt? It is over his own houſe; whoſe houſe are all ſuch as are called by him, if they receive and hold faſt that which gives a right to him, and intereſt in him, chap. iii. 6. and ver. 14. For as under the law, the high prieſt was prieſt only over the outward Iſrael, the Jews natural; ſo under the goſpel, Chriſt is appointed of God high prieſt over the inward Jews, the Jews ſpiritual.

Obſ. 7. How this apoſtle or high prieſt of our profeſſion doth work in the hearts of his family or houſehold?

hold? which is by the Word of Life, by the Word of his own eternal power, which pierceth deep, and divideth between ſoul and ſpirit, joints and marrow, diſcerning and judging every thought and intent, and bringing every high reaſoning and imagination into captivity, that the heart, ſoul, mind and ſpirit, with all the thoughts and intents thereof, may become ſubject to his ſpirit and power, chap. iv. 12.

Obſ. 8. What an advantage we have, by having ſuch an high prieſt (as was tempted like us, and touched with the ſenſe of our infirmities) of coming boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need! For he who experimentally knew what the weakneſs of our fleſh is, and what it was to be tempted therein, and how needful and ſeaſonable help from his Father then was; ſurely he cannot but be ready to give out, and multiply grace and mercy to his in the time of their need, chap. iv. 15, 16.

Obſ. 9. How Chriſt came to be an high prieſt? which was not by his own taking the honour to himſelf, but by God's glorifying him with the call thereto, chap. v. 4, 5.

Obſ. 10. How God fitted Chriſt, and made him a perfect high prieſt? which was by preparing for him a body of fleſh, and exerciſing him in the days of his fleſh with many trials and temptations; and at laſt with a bitter baptiſm, and cup of death, in which he felt and bare the griefs and ſorrows of his people, and cried mightily to his Father, and was heard in that he feared: and ſo having himſelf perfectly learned obedience to his Father, he knows how to become the author of eternal ſalvation to all that obey him. For Chriſt, who was heard and ſaved from death in his obedience to his Father, is appointed to be the leader and Saviour of his people, to ſave and redeem them in their obedience unto him, the leader into, and in the way and paths of life, chap. v. 7, 8, 9.

Obſ. 11. Where Chriſt mediates for his people? which is within the veil, in the heavenly place, in the

the holieſt of all, where the anchor of our hope reacheth to him and faſteneth upon him, and there remains ſure and ſtedfaſt; ſo that we are ſtayed upon him, the rock of life and power, againſt all the ſtorms and tempeſts of the powers of darkneſs, both inward and outward, chap. vi. 19, 20.

Obſ. 12. After what order Chriſt was made an high prieſt; which was after the order of Melchizedeck, who was king of righteouſneſs, and king of peace, even after an holy and heavenly order: not after the order of the earthly prieſthood, the high prieſts whereof were taken from amongſt men, but after his order who was made mention of; without father, without mother, without deſcent (for who can declare his generation?) without beginning of days or end of life, chap. vii. 1, 2, 3. and 15.

Obſ. 13. That this prieſt put an end to and changed the laws of the other earthly, ſhadowy prieſthood of Levi, by which perfection was not, that he might bring in that prieſthood of his own, by which perfection was to be, chap. vii. 11, &c.

Obſ. 14. How Chriſt was made prieſt after a different manner from the prieſts of the law: for they were made prieſts after the law of a carnal commandment; but Chriſt was not prieſt ſo, but after the power of an endleſs life, chap. vii. 16.

Obſ. 15. That the work of Chriſt's prieſthood continueth until it be finiſhed; that is, till this high prieſt hath ſaved all whom he is to ſave, which is thus: as in all ages the Father draweth ſouls to him, ſo he is to ſave them; to deſtroy their enemies, to blot out their ſins, to break down what ſtands between God and them, and ſo to bring them into the true oneneſs; for God will never be reconciled to his enemy the devil, nor to man while in union with him, chap. vii. 24, 25.

Obſ. 16. That this high prieſt needeth not to offer many ſacrifices to atone by, as the prieſts under the law needed to do often: for he was a perfect prieſt, and offered up one perfect, ſpotleſs ſacrifice; and is a propitiation

propitiation for the ſins of the whole world, chap. vii. 27, 28.

Obſ. 17. What ſanctuary is Chriſt the high prieſt and miniſter of? which is, of that ſanctuary and true tabernacle which the Lord pitcheth, and not man, chap. viii. 2.

Obſ. 18. What hath he to offer? for every high prieſt was ordained to offer both gifts and ſacrifices. He hath the heavenly gifts and ſacrifices to offer; even all the gifts and ſpiritual ſacrifices that are revived and brought forth by him in the holy place, even in his temple or ſpiritual houſe within the veil; he is to offer them all up to his Father, ver. 3, &c.

Obſ. 19. What covenant is he mediator of? even a better covenant than the prieſts under the law were mediators of, which is eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes: a covenant, wherein there is no defectiveneſs or imperfection, wherein all ſhall certainly be redeemed and ſaved by him, who come to him in the drawing of the Father, and abide with him. For in ſuch God will put his laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and "will be their God, and they "ſhall be his people;" and will ſo teach them, that they ſhall need no other teacher; but ſhall all know him from the leaſt to the greateſt. For as men come into this covenant, God will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their iniquities will he remember no more, ver. 6. to the end.

Obſ. 20. That Chriſt is not an high prieſt of the figures of things, but of the good things themſelves (which came in the time of reformation) even of the perfect covenant, the perfect tabernacle, and of the worſhip and ſervice in Spirit and in truth; where the perfect refiner (by his Spirit of judgment and burning) purifieth the ſons of Levi, that they may offer to God an offering in righteouſneſs, chap. ix. 9, 10, 11. and Mal. iii. 3.

So that there is a different ſtate witneſſed by the people of God in this covenant, from what was witneſſed by the Jews in the other covenant: for what

was

was amiſs there, is reformed here by the Spirit and power of our God, in all thoſe that abide and walk in this covenant; who live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and do not fulfill the luſts of the fleſh, which grieve and provoke God's Holy Spirit.

Obſ. 21. How Chriſt came to obtain eternal redemption for all his? which was by his blood. For as the high prieſt under the law entered into the holy place of that tabernacle made with hands, by the blood of goats and calves, and ſo obtained remiſſion for the ſins of that outward people the Jews; ſo Chriſt entered into the truly holy place, into the greater and more perfect tabernacle, and there by his blood obtained remiſſion for all that ſhould receive repentance from him, and believe in him, ver. 11, 12.

Obſ. 22. How Chriſt purifieth, purgeth, and ſanctifieth the people with his blood? which is, by ſprinkling it upon them. For under the law, in that outward covenant, the unclean were ſprinkled with the blood of the ſacrifice, that they might be ſanctified to the purifying of the fleſh; and under the goſpel, in this inward covenant, believers are ſprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, that their conſciences might be purged from dead works to ſerve the living God, as his cleanſed, holy, renewed people, ver. 13, 14.

Obſ. 23. For what cauſe Chriſt was mediator of the New Teſtament? which was, that by means of death for the redemption of the tranſgreſſors under the firſt Teſtament, they which are called might receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance, ver. 15. For God hath made Chriſt a propitiation for all men, both Jews and Gentiles, that through faith in his blood, his righteouſneſs might be declared for remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God, that he might be juſt, and a juſtifier of him who is of the faith of Jeſus, Rom. iii. 15, 16. So that they that were under the firſt covenant, hearkening unto him, and believing in him, were juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes, Acts xiii. 39.

Obſ.

Obſ. 24. The neceſſity of Chriſt's death, which was, becauſe he was to make way by his own blood into the holieſt, to appear before God for us; and to ſprinkle the heavenly things with the blood of a ſacrifice, of an higher and better nature than the blood of bulls and goats was; for that was the blood of the covenant, which was to paſs away, but he was to ſprinkle his with the blood of the everlaſting covenant; and by this his death and blood (ſprinkled upon the hearts of his) his covenant comes to be of force, ver. 16. to 25. and chap. xiii. 20, 21.

Obſ. 25. That this high prieſt need not often offer ſacrifices to put away ſin, as the prieſts of the law did; becauſe this one offering is ſufficient, and the blood thereof ſprinkled upon the conſcience, is able to purge away dead works, wherever it is ſprinkled. There needeth not any other offering, nor any other blood to do it; but all that is now further needed, or to be expected by *his*, is his appearing the *ſecond* time, without ſin, unto ſalvation, in the pure virtue, power, and life of his own Spirit, ver. 25. to the end.

Obſ. 26. What it was, that was the thing of great value with the Father, in Chriſt giving up himſelf to death? It was his obedience. He did obey his Father in all things, not doing his own will, but the will of him that ſent him. "He was obedient to death, even the death of the croſs:" and ſo, as by one man's diſobedience, death came upon all; ſo by the obedience of *one*, the free gift came upon all, which free gift is unto life; for life comes upon all that come to him, and believe in him, through the free gift, which is freely tendered to, and come upon all, Rom. v. 18, 19.

Obſ. 27. That God took away ſacrifices, and burnt-offerings, which were appointed by the old covenant, that he might eſtabliſh this obedience among all his children. Chriſt led the way, and all are to follow him in the new obedience, and to walk in newneſs of Spirit before the Lord, ver. 9.

Obſ. 28. That we are ſanctified by the ſame will, by which Chriſt was ſanctified, or ſanctifieth himſelf. In ſubjection

ſubjection to the ſame will, which the head obeyed (even in denying themſelves, taking up the croſs to their own wills, and ſubmitting to God's) are the members ſanctified. The Spirit of God works them into holineſs by this will of God, and through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once, ver. 10. John xvii. 19.

So mark: there is the will of God, the offering up the body of Jeſus, the pouring out the Spirit of grace, the new covenant, and faith in Chriſt, &c. All theſe tend to work out one and the ſame thing, and they all concur thereto, in their ſeveral orders and places.

Obſ. 29. That as this high prieſt ſanctifies men, ſo he perfects them; and when they are fully ſanctified, then they are for ever perfected; but till then, Chriſt, the high prieſt of our profeſſion, hath ſomewhat to do upon them towards the perfecting of them, that he may preſent them ſpotleſs, and blameleſs to his Father, ver. 14, 15.

Obſ. 30. How the apoſtle proves, "That by this "one offering, Chriſt hath for ever perfected them "that are ſanctified." He proves it thus: by this offering the covenant is eſtabliſhed, wherein is the putting and writing God's law in the heart and mind, the remiſſion of ſins.

So, come into this covenant, come under this high prieſt; there is no more remembering of ſin there, but perfect forgiveneſs through this one offering, and ſo no more need of any more ſacrificing or offering for ſins to ſuch, ver. 15—19. For "he ſhall ſprinkle "many nations with the blood of this one offering," Iſa. lii. 15.

Obſ. 31. The great privilege of thoſe, who do indeed believe in Chriſt, and are ſprinkled with the blood, and how they are to improve and make uſe of that privilege.

Firſt, They have liberty, confidence, or boldneſs, to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, ver. 19. What is more holy than God's Spirit? Is not that the moſt holy place? Why, there *they* are to worſhip; for they

they that worſhip the Father in the new covenant, or according to the new covenant, muſt worſhip him in the Spirit, and in the truth; yea, and muſt alſo live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, which is the place of everlaſting reſt, and the land of the living.

Secondly, Take notice how they come into the holieſt, which is by the new and living way, which Chriſt hath prepared, or conſecrated through his fleſh, ver. 20.

Thirdly, They have an high prieſt there over the houſe of God, who appears before God in the holieſt, and ſtands ready there to perform all the offices of prieſthood for his houſhold, ver. 21.

Fourthly, There is an orderly way of drawing nigh to God, and worſhipping him in the holieſt. There is a certain manner, after which believers are to approach, and draw nigh to God; which is, 1. With a true heart. 2. In fulneſs of faith, or in full aſſurance of faith; not waveringly, but as thoſe that are called of God, and ſhall be helped by him, and accepted of him through their high prieſt. 3 In purity of conſcience and converſation, having their hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and their bodies waſhed with pure water, ver. 22, 23. and Pſal. xxvi. 6. "Chriſt came by water and blood;" ſo here is both the water and the blood, according to the figures thereof, under the law.

Obſ. 32. Whither they came in the apoſtles days, who knew Chriſt as their high-prieſt and mediator, and who partook of the blood of ſprinkling? They came to ſpiritual Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, Heb. xii. 22.

Obſerve likewiſe where they walked, who felt the virtue of Chriſt's blood cleanſing them; which was "in the light, as God is in the light," 1 John i. 7.

Now, what light is that which the redeemed are to walk in? Is it not the light of the Lamb's city, the New Jeruſalem? Is it not the light thereof, that the nations of them that are ſaved muſt walk in? Rev. xxi. 24. Yea, this light, this city, and the holy wa-

ters of the ſanctuary, which flow and ſtream from the river of life there, were in meaſure known and experienced in the days of old, which David prayed for, and experienced a ſenſe of, Pſal. xliii. 3. and xlvi. 4. Yea, he knew alſo the blood of the everlaſting covenant, praying and waiting to be ſprinkled and cleanſed therewith, Pſal. li. 6. For he looked through the outward figure, to what his ſoul needed to purge and waſh it inwardly; which outward hyſſop, or outward water of purification, he knew would not do; for he that ſaw through the outward ſacrifices, to the inward, could not chuſe but ſee through theſe alſo.

But that power, virtue, and life of God's Spirit, which could "create a clean heart, and renew a right "ſpirit in him," and bring him into God's preſence, where he might feel the upholdings of his free Spirit, and partake of the joy of God's ſalvation and deliverance from that which had defiled him; this was it he prayed for; knowing aſſuredly, he ſhould here meet with the true hyſſop, and water of life, and blood of the covenant, which purgeth the heart and conſcience from dead works, and maketh it whiter than the ſnow in God's ſight, ver. 10, 11, 12. For he that delighted not in ſacrifice, nor burnt-offerings, neither could he delight in hyſſop, or water, or blood, outward or natural; but in that which melteth the heart, and purifieth the conſcience, from that which is dead and unclean, in that is God's delight; and in that which is melted, broken, and purified by it, ver. 16, 17.

Obſ. Laſtly, That there is a ſin unto death, a kind of ſinning for which there is no ſacrifice (but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, to deſtroy and devour the adverſaries, ver. 26, 27.), which is a wilful deſpiſing this covenant; which he that doth, muſt die without mercy; as he that deſpiſed Moſes's law did, ver. 28, 29. For the Lord will revenge this ſin, whereſoever he finds it; and ſuch ſhall know, that it is a "fearful thing to fall "into

" into the hands of the living God," when he comes to judge them, ver. 30, 31.

XVIII.

A brief Relation of the Eſtate or Condition the Lord found many of us in, when he came to viſit us, and make known to us the bleſſed Miniſtration of his Spirit and Power, and of ſome of his Dealings with us, in inſtructing and nurturing us up therein; with a few Words of Exhortation.

THERE are chambers of imagery in many people; and ſtrong-holds, and reaſonings, and imaginations, and high thoughts, exalted above the pure ſeed and meaſure of life in their hearts. For every true Chriſtian, every true believer, hath received ſomewhat of Chriſt's Spirit, ſome proportion of grace and truth from the fulneſs of Chriſt, which is as leaven and ſalt, to leaven the heart, and ſeaſon the mind and ſpirit with.

But all do not diſtinctly know this, nor are all that do know it ſubject to it; ſo that this doth not lead, and command, and rule in all; but there is ſomewhat which holds captive, and the enemy of the ſoul hath the rule and dominion in many mens ſpirits, profeſſing godlineſs; whereby the ſeed is kept under in them, and their ſouls kept back from that redemption and deliverance, which they ſhould partake of, in and with the ſeed. So many talk of the goſpel (and ſpeak great words of Chriſt, and redemption by him) who knew not " immortality brought to light," nor the dead raiſed by it, to live to God and praiſe his name.

Now in theſe chambers of imagery, in theſe ſtrong-holds, there are many pleaſant pictures, many images of the heavenly things, which men form in their minds, from their own apprehendings and conceivings upon the ſcriptures. For men reading the ſcriptures, not in the life, Spirit, and power which gave them

forth, but with that which is natural, they come not to the true, pure, heavenly, living knowledge; but only obtain a natural knowledge, according to which they believe and worſhip; and ſo fall down before, and according to, the apprehenſions and imaginations of their own minds; and ſo one believes and worſhips one way, and another believes and worſhips another way. And truly, here men worſhip they know not what; but they that are the true Jews, know what they worſhip: for ſalvation is of the true Jews, who worſhip neither at this mountain, nor at the other mountain; but only in Spirit, and in truth, even in the life and power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Thus it is with all men in their ſeveral profeſſions of religion in the darkneſs, in the apoſtaſy from the true life and power, which all ſorts have erred and wandered from, but few have returned to. Ah! few have found the pearl of price, which hath been long loſt; but have contented themſelves with a literal relation and knowledge concerning the pearl, without knowing and poſſeſſing the pearl itſelf. Yea, indeed, this was the ſtate of darkneſs the Lord found us all in, when he came to viſit us; for the ſtrong man armed had his ſtrong-holds in us, whereby he held us in the bands of death, and kept us captive, and free from that righteous life and power which we thirſted after. But when the ſtronger than he came, he battered his ſtrength, he aſſaulted and took his ſtrong-holds: he brake all his reaſonings, knowledge, wiſdom, and ſubtilty, wherein he truſted, and made ſpoil of his goods, and delivered the captives from under his hand.

For, indeed, when the mighty day of the Lord came upon us, and his pure heavenly light ſhone in our hearts, God ſearched Jeruſalem as with candles, diſcovering the moſt hidden things of Eſau's nature inwardly; and then all the knowledge and wiſdom, all the underſtanding and experiences, which were treaſured up in us out of the pure life, out of the truth, which lives and abides, they were found dead, and condemned as dead in us, and ſo caſt forth, as the treaſures

treaſures of Egypt and Babylon, and thrown to the bats and moles; who either creep up and down in the earthly nature, or ſoar aloft in the dark dreams and imaginations of the night of darkneſs and apoſtaſy.

For when the true light ſhines, it diſcovers what the day is, and what the night is; and the things which are of the day, and the things alſo which are of the night.

Now when the Lord thus appeared unto us, and cauſed the light of his Son to ſhine in us, many of us quickly came out of Egypt, turning our backs upon the darkneſs; and went willingly into the wilderneſs, to travel along with the Lord, and to be exerciſed and fitted there for the good land, the land of the redeemed, the land of the living, the land which flows with milk and honey (which is pure heavenly food), whither they that come, find the excellent vine, which bears the heavenly grapes, of which is the wine of the kingdom, and the true olive, which yields ſweet oil; and houſes which they built not, wherein are many manſions of reſt and pure glory; and vineyards which they planted not, wherein the living plants grow, and ſpring up in the preſence of the Lord, who dwells among his, and walks in the gardens and holy plantations.

But there were others, who were loth to come out of Egypt, or to forſake the idols and way of worſhip in Egypt and Babylon, whom the enemy long held captive in their thoughts and reaſonings, and in the diſputings of their minds.

Now theſe ſuffered much, and felt many of the ſtrokes and dreadful judgments of the Lord, poured out upon that ſpirit in them, which held them captive, and upon them for their hearkenings and joinings to the ſubtil twinings, and entangling reaſonings and ſuggeſtions of that ſpirit. For the enemy uſeth all his ſtrength and ſubtilty to the utmoſt, to hold his captives in ſubjection to him, and under his power, as long as ever he can. He keeps every hold, he ſtrengthens every reaſoning, and every thought and imagination of the mind againſt God's call, againſt the ap-

pearances of his Spirit in the heart. *Do not go yet (ſaith the enemy); thy way is not yet plain before thee, thy light is not yet clear enough; the reaſon or conſideration which is objected, is not yet fully anſwered. Thou art to try all things; but there is this, or that, or the other conſideration, which thou haſt not yet tried, or conſidered of fully, and ſatisfactorily to thy own heart.*

Thus many pure drawings of the Father (in which there was light ſufficient for the ſoul to follow) have been loſt, and the ſoul thereby hath miſſed of the hand which was put forth (in the tender love of the Lord) to help and ſave it.

Queſt. But ſome may ſay, *What have ye learned of the Lord more than we, or more than ye knew before, when ye walked among us, and practiſed the ordinances which we practiſe? Have not we good directions from the ſcriptures? Do not we practiſe them? And is not the Spirit of God in the ſcriptures? are they not joined together; and ſo, having the ſcriptures, we have the Spirit of God too?*

Anſw. It is not in my heart to enter into diſpute now, though I am ſenſible of the darkneſs from whence this objection ariſeth: and oh! that it were removed from their hearts in whom it is; for truly, we ourſelves were once there; and when we were there, we knew not the ſcriptures aright, as we ought to know, nor the power of God! But to anſwer plainly and directly to the thing itſelf:

There are *three* things I ſhall mention (beſides many others, which might be mentioned) which the Lord hath taught us, ſince his Spirit and power hath appeared to us, and led us out of the darkneſs, towards, and into, the land of light; which are theſe. He hath taught us to believe, he hath taught us to obey, and he hath taught us to pray to him in the name of his Son.

Object. *Why; did ye never learn theſe before?*

Anſw. No, not ſo as the Lord hath taught us. There was indeed ſome true faith from the true ſeed in us, and ſome true obedience, and ſome pure breathings to the Father, in the days of our former profeſ-

ſion;

ſion; but we knew not the root from whence they came, ſo as to turn it, and abide in it; and ſo the holy deſires, and true ſenſe in us, were often made a prey of, and we ſtill in want and penury in a ſtrange land, and could not enjoy (poſſeſs or retain) what was freely given us of our God and Father in Chriſt; but ſtill a fleſhly wiſdom, a fleſhly comprehenſion, a fleſhly nature, mind, and knowledge (which in that day went with us for ſpiritual, as well as it doth ſo with others now), pecked up over it; and ſo Hagar was in the houſe, and would be miſtreſs there, but was not caſt out with her ſeed. Oh! who can read and truly underſtand this! But when the Lord turned us to the light of his Spirit, and by the light and power of his Spirit brake the bonds and chains of darkneſs in us; then we could believe in him who appeared, and (in the ſtrength and virtue received from him) we could obey him, yielding our members inſtruments of righteouſneſs to do his will; and in the Spirit of the Son (which we then received in the faith, even the heavenly Spirit, the moſt excellent Spirit) we could pray to the Father; firſt, ſighing and groaning before him, afterwards pouring out our requeſts and ſupplications to him, and giving of thanks.

Queſt. *How did the Lord teach you to believe? Or what did he teach you to believe now, more than before?*

Anſw. It is written in the prophets, "all thy "children ſhall be taught of the Lord;" and in the new covenant it is promiſed, "they ſhall all know me, "from the leaſt to the greateſt."

Now, as we were brought by the Lord into the light of this covenant, we were taught thus to know him, and to believe in him, and his Son, as thus made known. So that we knew the Father revealing the Son, and the Son revealing the Father; and our hearts were drawn to believe in both, as they were both revealed in us, and to us, and the revealing was in the Spirit of both, in the light of both, in the life of both, in the power of both; which Spirit, which light, which life, which power is one; and he that indeed knows

the Son, knows the Father alſo; and he that indeed knows the Father, knows the Son alſo.

Very deep and weighty was that anſwer of Chriſt to Philip, when Philip ſaid, "ſhew us the Father, and it "ſufficeth. Haſt thou not ſeen me, Philip? ſaid "Chriſt. How is it that thou ſayeſt, ſhew us the "Father? He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father "alſo." Are they not one nature, one wiſdom, one power, one pure eternal being? Can the *one* poſſibly be ſeen, and not the *other?* Though they may be diſtinguiſhed in manifeſtation, in the hearts where they are received; is it poſſible they ſhould be divided and ſeparated the one from the other?

Thoſe that thus apprehend, plainly manifeſt, that they never received the true knowledge of the Father and Son; but have only notions and apprehenſions of man's wiſdom concerning them.

So now to us there is but one God and Father, "Of whom are all things, and we in him;" and "one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and "we by him;" and but one Spirit and power of life, which we have received of the Son and Father, through which we believe, and lay hold on the pure eternal power and ſtrength of the Almighty, which redeems and ſaves the ſoul; and ſo believing on him, who raiſed up our Lord Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, here we meet with juſtification, and are at peace with our God, laying hold on his ſtrength, and being held by it.

And ſo here, in the new covenant, under the teaching of God's Spirit, we witneſs that ſcripture fulfilled in our hearts, Iſa. xxvii. 4, 5.

Queſt. *How did the Lord teach you to obey? Ye do not obey the ten commandments; ye neither learned, nor teach them: but all that ye obey is all light and ſpirit within; which may be a ſpirit of deluſion, for ought we know; and we believe it is ſo, becauſe we do not find it agreeing with the ſcriptures, nor you in the practice of the ordinances of Chriſt, according to the ſcriptures.*

Anſw. That harſh ſpirit, which in this manner objecteth,

jecteth, is not very fit nor likely to receive or embrace information, from the meek and tender Spirit of the Lamb; but there are ſome, who are broken and tendered, and fit to receive impreſſion and information from the Holy Spirit and power of our God; and to them, and for their ſakes, are my anſwers given forth and directed. So, for their ſakes, I ſhall proceed in plainneſs, and evidence of truth, anſwering, as the Lord ſhall open my heart.

Truly, the Lord hath taught us obedience, ſo as we never learned before; putting his laws into our minds, and writing them in our hearts, and giving us his good Spirit to dwell in us, to quicken and help us to obey and perform his holy laws. And thoſe two commandments (on which the whole law and prophets hang); to wit, "To love God with all our hearts, "and our neighbours as ourſelves," as taught by Moſes and Chriſt: yea, the very ſubſtance of the law written in tables of ſtone, he hath inwardly written in our hearts, and taught us to obſerve and obey; ſo that we have no other God but him, who brought us out of ſpiritual Egypt, by his out-ſtretched arm and holy power, revealed inwardly for us, as it was outwardly for that people of the Jews, whom God redeemed out of outward Egypt.

Indeed before, other Lords had rule over us, and ſomewhat ſtill got between us and our God; ſo that, when we were without the limits of the pure power, we were idolaters in God's ſight, though we then knew it not; but now we make mention of the Lord's name only.

So the Lord hath taught us not to make any image, or likeneſs of his appearance, or of the heavenly things; not to form any thing in our minds from the ſcriptures; but to wait on God, to know his truths revealed in their own pure nature.

The Lord hath likewiſe taught us to ſanctify his name, which he hath made known to us, and not to take it in vain; but to reverence his holy power and Spirit, in every degree of his appearance; for the name

of

of our God is living, and is only ſanctified, and not taken in vain, by thoſe that are living.

Alſo the Lord hath taught us to obſerve and keep his holy ſabbath, and day of reſt (even the day of the goſpel-reſt, for that is the ſabbath now), not doing our own works, or thinking our own thoughts, or kindling a fire of ourſelves, on his holy day; but ceaſing from our own willing and running, and from all the works of the fleſh; and waiting to feel him work in us, both "to will and to do of his good plea-"ſure;" which works in the Spirit (works of faith, of love, of mercy, &c.) break not the goſpel-reſt or ſabbath.

And having thus learned the duties of the firſt table (the Lord having circumciſed our hearts to "love the "Lord our God with all our hearts," and to exalt him, his Spirit, his nature, his will, his name, his day in us), the duties of the ſecond table are eaſy and natural to us, and we cannot but "do to others as we "would be done unto;" and ſo love and honour all men in the Lord, as the Lord teacheth us from the true and holy balance. Therefore, we cannot *kill*, or *commit adultery*, or *ſteal*, or *bear falſe witneſs*, or *covet any thing that is our neighbour's*.

Then, for the laws and ordinances of the new teſtament; the miniſtration of the goſpel is a miniſtration of Spirit and power; even of the light of the everlaſting day, which the true miniſtry was ſent to turn mens minds from the darkneſs to.

And here we ſee what was taught and required before the apoſtaſy, while the church was in its firſt glory; and what was permitted and practiſed by permiſſion; which were ſuch kind of things, as were not of the nature of the kingdom, not of the nature of the light of the goſpel-day; but of a lower nature, of an outward nature, of an earthly (elementary) nature, which were to be ſhaken in due time, that that which could not be ſhaken (which they ſignified of, and repreſented) might remain, and be eſtabliſhed in the ſpiritual and heavenly Jeruſalem (which is the Jeru-

Jeruſalem of the goſpel) without any ſuch thing as could be ſhaken; as is teſtified, Heb. xii. 22, to the end: and we underſtand alſo from God's Spirit, and from the ſcriptures of truth, that all ſuch kind of things were part of, or belonging to, the outward court; which was ſhaken, and given to the Gentiles, when God's Spirit meaſured what he would have abide with his true, inward, ſpiritual Jews; and what he would leave to the profeſſing world; who in mind, nature, and ſpirit, and in God's account alſo, are but Gentiles.

Queſt. *How did God teach you to pray? Surely ye never learned the Lord's prayer; for ye do not practiſe that among you.*

Anſ. As God brought us into a ſenſible condition, ſo we came to feel our wants, and the need of our ſouls, inwardly and ſpiritually.

Now, waiting on the Lord in this ſenſe, when we meet together, and when we are alone alſo, the Lord breatheth upon us, and kindleth in us fervent deſires and longings of ſoul after that which is pure, and to be delivered from that which is impure; and that we might be ingraffed more and more into Chriſt; and that judgment and condemnation might paſs upon all that is not of God in us, and that our hearts might be ſo united to the Lord, as that we might fear his name fully. For we feel and obſerve, that all our life and ſtrength flows from the union of our ſouls with the Lord; and therefore, above all things, we cry for that, and for ſeparation from that ſpirit which captivateth into the things of the earth, and in the earthly mind and nature.

So we watch unto prayer, and watch for help from God in our calling upon him; and are deeply ſenſible that we have need both of watching and praying continually, the enemy is ſo near, and the ſoul's ſnares and dangers ſo many.

And truly, Chriſt, our Lord and maſter, who taught his diſciples to pray formerly, hath taught us alſo to pray that very prayer; though not to ſay the words outwardly in the will of men, or in our own will; he hath

hath taught our hearts to breathe after the ſame things, even that the name of our heavenly Father might be hallowed or ſanctified more and more, among all that call upon his name in truth, and eſpecially in our own hearts; and that his kingdom might come more and more, that he might reign more in mens ſpirits, and the kingdom of ſin and Satan be thrown down; and that his will might *be done*, even in our *earth*, *as it is done in heavenly* places, where all the hoſts of God obey him; and that we might have every day a proportion of the *heavenly bread*, whereby our ſouls may live to him; and convenient food and proviſion outward alſo, according as he ſeeth good, who careth for us.

Now, as we are kept in the light, and watch to the light which diſcovers things, we ſee what we are kept out of, and what we at any time are entangled in, and ſo *treſpaſs* againſt the Lord; and then we are taught to beg pardon, and to wait where pardon is to be received, through our advocate, even as God hath taught us to *forgive*.

Yet this doth not imbolden any of the little ones to ſin; but they pray *that they may not be led* (or fall) *into temptation*; but may witneſs deliverance from the *evil*, which the enemy watcheth to betray and inſnare them with. And theſe cries are put up to him, who is ready to hear, and who can anſwer and fulfill the deſires of them that love and fear him; and indeed not only ſo, but they are alſo put up in faith, that in the way of God the ſoul ſhall obtain and receive what it prayeth and waiteth for.

Now we witneſs this to be *true religion, and undefiled before God*; and we are ſenſible that the Lord hath taught us this, and is with us in our faith, which he hath given us; in our obedience, in our praying to him in the name of his Son, in our watching, in our waiting, in the ſilence of our ſpirits, before his mighty and glorious majeſty.

Oh! that ye all knew our God, and his Chriſt, in the ſame covenant and power of life, wherein it hath pleaſed

pleaſed him to make himſelf manifeſt to us! Oh! awake! awake! out of your dreams, come out of the night of ſin and darkneſs, into the light of the day!

Be not offended that I call them *dreams of the night*, for they are no better before the light of the day. Oh! be not contented with dreams concerning God; with dreams concerning fellowſhip with him and the ſaints in light; with dreams concerning remiſſion, concerning juſtification, concerning peace, concerning ſanctification, concerning the help of God's Spirit in prayer, &c.

Ah! friends, dear friends (for ye, in whom there are any true breathings after the Lord, are ſo to me); oh! let go the dead for the living; away with dead knowledge, dead faith, dead hope, dead prayers, dead underſtanding of the ſcriptures, dead ſtrivings after holineſs, which ye ſhall never obtain, but be ſtill bowed down under corruption, when at any time truly ſenſible, notwithſtanding all theſe (truly groaning and complaining is your beſt ſtate here, for your peace here is wrong); and come to feel that raiſed in you, in the true retired waiting upon the Lord, which ſhall certainly obtain in you, as your minds are united to it, and come into the true ſenſe and ſubjection under it; and then ye ſhall obtain in it, and with it, what the hearts of all the upright (whether in captivity, or out of captivity) breathe after!

Oh! therefore, be not any longer prejudiced, by the ſubtil devices and deceits of the enemy, againſt that in your hearts which reproves becauſe of ſin; and likewiſe draws and leads into that which is holy; for it is no leſs than the pure, heavenly light of God's own Spirit, whatever ye, through miſtake, miſunderſtanding, or want of true experience, may judge of it.

XIX.

Concerning the Goſpel State.

THE goſpel is a miniſtration of the new covenant, or a ſpiritual miniſtration of the ſubſtance of all that was ſhadowed out under the law. There were many things under the law; but in the goſpel, God hath gathered all into one; in Chriſt there is but one ſeed, one Spirit, one life, one power, which redeems, one circumciſion, one baptiſm, one faith, &c.

The law was given by Moſes, and the miniſtration thereof continued through the prophets, until the ſeed ſhould come, which was to put an end to the law, and the righteouſneſs thereof (as in the letter) and bring in the righteouſneſs of the ſpirit, which ſhould laſt for ever.

The goſpel is by Chriſt, by whom God ſpake in the laſt days, who is the beloved Son, the prophet and high prieſt of God, who is to be heard for ever; who taught his diſciples, while he was with them on earth, in that body of fleſh which his Father prepared for him; and afterwards by his Spirit (or holy anointing) whereby he continueth teaching his children, and bringing them up in the virtue, life, and power of the new covenant; giving them a new heart and ſpirit, and cauſing the old nature of the earthly Adam to die in them, and paſs away from them.

The law was given to the Jew outward, and is againſt nature in man, which ſeems forward to obey, but will not.

The law alſo is given to check that part (or nature in man) which is above the ſeed, to which were all the ſhadows and types outward.

But in the goſpel, which is the power of God to the redemption of the ſoul, that part is done away, and the ſeed raiſed, and comes to live in the ſoul, and the ſoul in the power which quickens it, in and through the ſeed.

And

And ſo, here the life, and virtue, and nature of the ſeed overſhadows all, and changes all in the goſpel-miniſtration; ſo that here is a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein God reigns, and where righteouſneſs dwells; and the old things, where unrighteouſneſs dwelt, and wherein the devil reigned, are done away, and ſo his kingdom is deſtroyed, and laid waſte in man, and the kingdom of Chriſt ſet up, exalted, and eſtabliſhed.

Then comes the mountain of the Lord's houſe to be known on the top, and above all the mountains and hills; and then is the flowing of the enlightened ſoul thither, to learn of the Lord in his holy ſanctuary, that it may know his ways, and walk in his paths. Then is the voice of the true ſhepherd heard, and the law known (the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus) which cometh out of Sion, "and the word of the "Lord (even the Holy One of Iſrael) which cometh "from Jeruſalem." Then is the day of the Lord known; the mighty, terrible, ſhaking day of the Lord, which is then upon all fleſh, ſilencing it in the dread and awe of him, who is holy and pure; and the ſeed is then raiſed to life, and in life and power, and the Lord alone exalted in that ſoul. "For the Son "exalted the Father only, in the days of his fleſh;" and it is ſo now, wherever the ſame ſeed and power of life is made manifeſt, and rules.

Then after this ſhaking, after the work of this terrible day of the Lord in the heart, when God hath purged away the filth and blod of the defiled ſoul and ſpirit, by his Spirit of judgment and burning, then that which is left ſhall be called holy, and dedicated to the Lord, even in every one that is written and reckoned by God among the living in his Jeruſalem. And all God's tabernacles and dwelling-places on his holy mountain, and in his holy city, will he cover with the glory of his preſence; and all their aſſemblies (by his cloudy pillar, and by his ſhining flame) will God be a defence about; before which brightneſs (and the ariſing of his life and power in the

the midſt of his people) Satan with his devices and fiery darts ſhall fall like flaſhes of lightning, and his ſtorms and winds ſhall not be able to prevail againſt the houſes or dwelling-places which God builds on this his holy mountain of peace and ſalvation.

Then the rod of the ſtem of Jeſſe is known, and the branch which groweth out of his root, and the Spirit of the Lord reſting upon him. "For grace "and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt;" and where the grace and truth *which comes by Jeſus Chriſt* is received, and his everlaſting covenant entered into, there the ſame Spirit is poured forth, and reſts (even upon all the ſons), and true judgment is ſet up in the heart, and the ſoul eſtabliſhed in the righteouſneſs and peace of his kingdom.

So if any want wiſdom, let him aſk in faith; it is preſently given from the Spirit of wiſdom, which is poured out upon the ſeed; which is a Spirit of underſtanding and knowledge, and of pure heavenly fear, &c. which maketh quick in underſtanding the fear of the Lord; which fear (being underſtood and obſerved) keepeth the heart clean, teaching it to avoid and keep out of all that defiles; ſo that here is not ſo much as a touching the unclean thing by any of the ſons and daughters, who are led by God's Spirit, and live and walk in the Spirit; but a following of the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus fully and perfectly.

Let ſin and imperfection be received back to Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon, from whence it came; but let holineſs and unſtained beauty dwell in Sion; yea, let Urim and Thummim, even God's light and perfection, be with his redeemed people for ever and ever.

Here the wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lies with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and the little child leads them. Here the lion devours not, but eats ſtraw like the ox; and the ſucking child, and the weaned child, can play in the hole of the aſp, and put his hand on the cockatrice's den; and they that are in the power can tread upon ſerpents, and they cannot

cannot hurt, wound, poiſon, or deſtroy; for there is ſafety all over God's holy mountain, and the venom or poiſon of the wicked ſpirit cannot reach thither, to hurt or poiſon any there: for God's earth is filled with knowledge, with life, with pure living knowledge, which preſerves out of the reach of darkneſs and death.

Nay, here Ephraim doth not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim; for the envying, vexing nature and ſpirit is taken out of them both. And here is turned to the Lord a people of a pure language, who ſpeak the truth as they feel it, as they receive it from the Lord, in the life of it, in the true ſenſe and underſtanding of it, and not according to their own apprehendings or imaginings concerning it, which are the various and many languages of Babel. For in the ſeed, and of the ſeed, is the pure language; but out from the ſeed are the many voices and languages (even the confuſion of Babel); one ſpeaking, as he apprehends, thus; another ſpeaking, as he conceives, thus; ſo plainly manifeſting that they are out from the evidence and demonſtration of the Spirit, whoſe voice is one, and language one, in all, in the day of the goſpel. And he that ſpeaks otherwiſe than the law and teſtimony of life ſpeaks in the heart, it is either becauſe he knoweth not, or is not yet gathered into, the morning-light of the everlaſting day of the goſpel; for there all are to ſpeak, as the oracles of God, the truth as it is in Jeſus.

In this day the anger of God is turned away, and condemnation come to an end (for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, who "walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit);" and the Comforter is come, by whom God comforts the ſoul; and the ſoul with joy draweth water out of the wells or ſprings of the Comforter. Yea, the ſoul is gathered into the love (or into God, who is love), where the Saviour and ſalvation is felt, and God found ſuch a preſent help and ſtrength in time of trouble, that fear is done away, and the Lord truſted and hoped

in; yea, and boaſted of, in every condition. So that his name is made mention of, and ſung of, and exalted over all that can come to oppoſe or break down the work of his power in the heart; inſomuch that the inhabitant of Sion cries out and ſhouts againſt the enemy, when he appears, becauſe the Holy One of Iſrael is ſo great in the midſt of her, who breaks the ſpear and the bow, the ſhield and the battle, Selah. See Iſai. xii.

Yea, in this day the feaſt of fat things is made on God's holy mountain; of fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees well refined. And in this mountain the veil of the covering (ſpread over the heart) is done away: for in the ſeed there is no feigned covering; but an opening of the unveiled eye, to ſee the unveiled life and power, even the revealed arm of the Redeemer.

"Who hath believed our report: and to whom is "the arm of the Lord revealed?" It was ſaid ſo in the old covenant, in the law diſpenſation; but it is not ſaid ſo in the new covenant, in the goſpel diſpenſation; for the veil is done away in Chriſt, and the children there with open face behold (as in a mirror) the glory of the Lord.

And here, where the ſeed is revealed, and the ſoul come into the ſeed, and become one with the ſeed, that is felt which breaketh the ſerpent's head; and when his head is broken, death is ſoon ſwallowed up in victory, and the tears of ſorrow wiped away (ſo that there is no room for any tears now, but tears of joy, tears of melting love and ſweetneſs, before the Lord), and the rebuke becauſe of uncircumciſion taken away. For when God circumciſeth the heart, "to "love the Lord with all the heart," then it receiveth life from him, and then the ſhame and rebuke of the uncircumciſed and dead ſtate paſſeth away.

And then ſaith the ſoul, "Lo! this is my God "I ſo much wanted, and ſo long waited for. Oh! "he is come, he is come, to judge my heart in right-"eouſneſs, and to bring under all that hath kept the "ſeed

" ſeed under in me; and I feel him, my ſoul's ſalva-
" tion, and my heart is glad in him. And now I
" know the land of Judah" (for that land outwardly was but a figure of the inward), " and the ſtrong city
" that is therein" (which the righteous nation that keepeth the truth enters in at the gates of) " where
" God appointeth ſalvation for walls and bulwarks." See Iſai. xxv. and chap. xxvi.

And in this day, when the ſeed is raiſed, when the goſpel power reacheth to the ſeed, and raiſeth up the ſoul with the ſeed, and puniſheth Leviathan, that crooked ſerpent, and deſtroyeth the place where the dragons lay, ſo that as ſuch a place it can be found no more, becauſe the Lord hath made all things new, and laid waſte the old, then ſhall be ſung to her that was afflicted a vineyard of red wine, which the Lord will keep and water every moment, leſt any hurt it; yea, the Lord (who is the keeper of Iſrael, who neither ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth) will keep it night and day; and though fury be not in the Lord, yet he will go through the briars and thorns which ſet themſelves in battle againſt him, to hinder the current of his love and bleſſings upon his heritage.

But as for his people, God will be very gracious to them, anſwering them in all that they call upon him for, and being with them in the fire, and in the water; ſo that the waters ſhall not be able to overwhelm them, nor the flame of the fierceſt fire kindle upon them. For the enemies fire ſhall not be able to burn up God's heritage, nor their waters to overflow them; but God's fire and waters ſhall overflow and conſume the adverſaries, as he pleaſeth to let forth his overflowing ſcourge and fiery indignation upon them.

The goſpel is a ſtate of pouring out the Spirit of God upon his ſeed, and his bleſſing upon his offſpring; wherein he ſtrengthens that which is weak, and confirms that which is feeble; wherein he comforts worm Jacob, and recompenſeth vengeance to that which oppreſſed him, that which wounded him, that which bowed him down, that which cloſed his eye, ſtopped

his ear, made him dumb and lame, hardened his heart from God's fear, &c. that nature, that wiſdom, that ſpirit, that power, is viſited with vengeance. That which emptied him of the good, and made him deſolate and ſolitary, is now ſmitten, diſtreſſed, and made ſolitary; and the priſoner of hope looſed, and brought out of the pit; and the blind eye opened, and the deaf ear unſtopped, and the lame made to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to ſing, and the parched ground become a pool, and the thirſty land ſprings of water; and that nature wherein dragons dwelt is now changed, and life dwells there; and the holy new earth brings forth her increaſe of life to the Lord, and the way of holineſs is made plain; which rough Eſau, or conceited Iſhmael, or ſacrificing Cain, (who hath not the true brotherly love in him) cannot come into; but holy Abel, bleſſed Iſaac, plain Jacob, walked therein, and inherited the bleſſing; and the ranſomed of the Lord return from all their deſolations, captivities, and ſcatterings in the apoſtaſy, and come to Sion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon their heads, where they obtain joy and gladneſs, and where ſorrow and ſighing flee away. For when the Comforter is come to the ſoul, when the Spirit from on high is poured out upon it, then the wilderneſs becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted for a foreſt; then judgment dwells in the wilderneſs, and righteouſneſs remains in the fruitful field; then righteouſneſs is known, and the work thereof; and the work of righteouſneſs is peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever. And the people of God then dwell (even his holy Iſrael, his ſpiritual Iſrael, the redeemed ones by his Spirit and power) in a peaceable habitation, and in ſure dwellings, and in quiet reſting-places, where their God is to them as a munition of rocks, and as broad rivers of love, righteouſneſs, peace, joy, and bleſſedneſs for ever.

In the goſpel ſtate, the Lord, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Iſrael, who is the teacher of his people in

in the new covenant, who teacheth them to profit therein, and leadeth them in the way that they ſhould go: I ſay, in the goſpel ſtate he is known, and his voice hearkened to. "My ſheep" (thoſe whom I gather and redeem) "hear my voice, and follow me," ſaith Chriſt; who feed my flock like a ſhepherd, guiding them by my Spirit into freſh and green paſtures, gathering my lambs with my arm, carrying them in my boſom, and gently leading thoſe that are with young. Yea, I bring the blind by a way that they knew not, and lead them in paths they have not known. I make dark things light before them, and crooked things ſtrait. Theſe things do I unto them, and will not forſake them. Yea, worm Jacob, which was trampled upon by all, is now made a ſharp threſhing inſtrument having teeth, which threſheth the mountains (beating them ſmall) and makes the hills as chaff, which fans them, and the wind carrieth them away, and the whirlwind ſcattereth them; but Jacob rejoiceth in his God, and glorieth in the Holy One of Iſrael; who openeth rivers in high places, and fountains in the midſt of vallies; and makes the wilderneſs a pool of water, and the dry land ſprings of water. For the Lord hath comforted Sion, and had compaſſion on her waſte place, and on her oppreſſed ſeed in Babylon; and hath ſaid to the priſoners, "Go forth; "and to them that ſat in darkneſs, ſhew yourſelves "abroad in the light;" and he hath made her wilderneſs like Eden, and her deſart like the garden of the Lord; ſo that joy and gladneſs is found in her (even the joy of God's Spirit, which is unſpeakable and full of glory), with thankſgiving, and the voice of melody: for the deſtroyer, and thoſe that made her waſte, are gone forth of her, and great is the Holy One in the midſt of her. So that the barren that did not bear, ſings; and ſhe cries aloud, and breaks forth into ſinging, that did not travail with child; for ſhe travails not now in vain, but alſo brings forth abundantly: ſo that more are the children of the deſolate than of the formerly married wife. And how can it

be otherwiſe? For the Maker is the huſband, who hath made an everlaſting covenant of peace with the ſoul in the Son of his love, and keeps and preſerves in that covenant, where the Lord can never be wroth with the ſoul, nor rebuke it: for here all the children of the Lord are taught of the Lord, and kept in his holy fear, and in ſubjection to his Spirit; and great is their peace, and in righteouſneſs are they eſtabliſhed, and are far from oppreſſion, the terror whereof cannot come near them.

There are three or four things yet more on my heart to mention concerning the goſpel ſtate.

Firſt, In it the goſpel faſt is known; which is not to afflict the ſoul, or to hang down the head like a bulruſh for a day; but to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppreſſed go free, to break every yoke, to deal one's bread to the hungry ("to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their "affliction," and to keep one's ſelf unſpotted from the worldly ſpirit and nature, which defiles, and ſo not to touch the unclean thing).

Then the light of the ſoul breaks forth as the morning, and its health ſprings forth ſpeedily, and its righteouſneſs goeth before it (for that which judgeth unrighteouſneſs, that is its righteouſneſs; which inſtead of coming after, to reprove and condemn, now goeth before), and the glory of the Lord is the reward, coming after to preſerve and defend all that ſprings up in the power. Oh! bleſſed is he that witneſſeth this ſtate!

Secondly, In the goſpel ſtate the goſpel ſabbath is kept, and known to be God's holy day, and called a *delight* (the holy of the Lord, honourable), and the Lord is honoured in it by the ſoul while it walketh not in its own ways, nor findeth its own pleaſures, nor ſpeaketh its own words: and then the ſoul delighteth itſelf in the Lord, who then (in this ſtate) cauſeth it to ride on the high places of the earth, and feedeth it with the heritage of Jacob its father. What is that? What is Jacob's heritage? What is it Jacob is to be

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fed with, and inherit? Is it any leſs than the life and bleſſedneſs of the promiſed land? Is it any leſs than the hidden manna? Is it any leſs than the fruit of th living vine? Is it any other than the ſweetneſs and fatneſs of the true olive-tree?

Thirdly, In it the garment of ſalvation is put on, even the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; for here the filthy garments are put off, and the pure garments put on. For here the Lord hath appointed to them that "have mourned in "Sion, to give them beauty for aſhes, the oil of joy "for mourning, and the garment of praiſe for the "ſpirit of heavineſs," that they might be called trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. So that here the ſoul can truly ſay, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my ſoul ſhall "be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with "the garments of ſalvation; he hath covered me with "the robe of righteouſneſs." For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden cauſeth the things that are ſown in it to ſpring forth, ſo the Lord hath cauſed righteouſneſs and praiſe to ſpring forth before the eyes of all that are truly opened by him; and he will not draw back his arm, or put up the ſword which he hath drawn, till he hath deſtroyed his adverſaries, and laid waſte the mount of Eſau, and made his Jeruſalem the praiſe of the whole earth. *Amen, hallelujah!*

And here is the love which caſteth out fear, and removeth care; ſo that they that dwell here are careful in nothing, but in every thing make their requeſts known to God by prayer and ſupplication, with thankſgiving; "and the peace of God, which paſſeth all "underſtanding," guards the heart and mind, through Chriſt Jeſus. So that here God glorifieth the ſoul, changing it from glory to glory, in and by his Spirit; and God is praiſed and glorified in and by the ſoul, and the heart kept pure and chaſte in the eye of the Lord; and the converſation ordered aright by his Spirit and power, in which the ſoul lives and walks, and his ſalvation ſeen and enjoyed daily more and more. So that here is a poſſeſſion or inheritance of life in the

kingdom (in the holy land of the living) of which there is no end. Everlaſting endleſs prayers to the Holy One of Iſrael (whoſe tabernacle is with men, and who dwelleth in the midſt of his people) for ever and ever.

Now if any one doubt concerning the truth of theſe things, this word is in my heart to ſuch, *Come, and ſee.* Oh! come and ſee the glory of the Lord, and the power of his life, and righteouſneſs of his kingdom, which is now revealed, after the long night of darkneſs! Oh! bleſſed, bleſſed be his name, who hath cauſed his light to ſhine, and opened the eye (which was once blind) to ſee it!

Queſt. *But how may I come to ſee the glory of the goſpel ſtate?*

Anſ. Come to the ſeed, and wait to feel and receive the power which raiſeth the ſeed in the heart, and bringeth the heart, ſoul, mind, and ſpirit into union with the ſeed.

Queſt. *But how may I come to the ſeed; and how may I wait aright to feel and receive the power which raiſeth it?*

Anſ. Mind that in thee which ſearcheth the heart, and what it reacheth to, and quickeneth in thee; what it draweth thee from, what it draweth thee to; how it ſheweth thee thine own inability to follow, and how it giveth ability when thou art weary of toiling and labouring of thyſelf. Oh! this is he whom we have waited for! Thus he appeared to us; thus he taught us to turn in, and to turn from the kingdom of darkneſs within, towards the kingdom of light, which the good ſeedſman had ſown in us as a grain of muſtard-ſeed; which when we found, we knew it to be the pearl of price, and were made willing to *ſell all for it*; and now it is purchaſed, and alſo poſſeſſed in a good meaſure; bleſſed be the name of our merciful God, and tender Father, for ever and ever.

O hungering and thirſting ſoul after life (after truth, after the Lamb's righteouſneſs), do thou alſo wait to be taught of the Lord (who thus taught us), and then

then do thou go and do ſo likewiſe, and thou will never repent of this purchaſe, or of what thou parteſt with for it, when once thou comeſt to enjoy and poſſeſs any proportion of it.

The Lord make thee ſenſible of the viſits, drawings, and leadings of his Holy Spirit, and guide thy feet thereby into the way of truth and peace. Amen.

XX.

Concerning Baptiſm.

" He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; " but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned," MARK xvi. 16.

THIS is a very weighty ſcripture, and neceſſary for every Chriſtian rightly to underſtand, that he may ſo believe, and be ſo baptized, as to witneſs ſalvation by the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Now what believing is this which is here required as neceſſary to ſalvation, and which the promiſe of ſalvation is to? Is it any thing leſs than a *believing in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, from a ſenſe of the power which the Father hath given him to ſave with? Is it not an inward believing, a believing with the heart? And what baptiſm or waſhing is it which ſaves? Is it not an inward waſhing, a waſhing of the ſoul, a waſhing of the heart, a waſhing of the conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God? Doth outward waſhing ſave the ſoul? Inward waſhing doth; baptizing into the name doth. Bodily exerciſe profiteth little; but godlineſs (the inwardly renewing and waſhing of the mind) profiteth greatly.

There is one faith, one baptiſm. Is not the true faith inward and ſpiritual? Is not the one baptiſm ſo alſo? Sure I am, that he that thus believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, remaineth in the filthy, unwaſhed ſtate, in which there neither

neither is, nor can be, ſalvation; but judgment and condemnation, death and deſtruction, for ever.

The apoſtle Peter ſhews, Pet. iii. what the baptiſm is which ſaveth, even that which is the antitype, or which inwardly or ſpiritually anſwers to Noah's ark. The Greek word is Ἀντίτυπος, which ſignifieth the *antitype*, or that which anſwers to the type; the ſubſtance, which comes inſtead of the figure or ſhadow; and ſo it is more properly and naturally rendered in the old tranſlation thus: *The baptiſm that now is, anſwering that figure, ſaveth.* For as Noah's ark ſaved the bodies of thoſe that were in it when God came to judge and deſtroy the old world; ſo the inward waſhing ſaveth thoſe that are waſhed thereby from the wrath and deſtruction which will come upon all that are unwaſhed.

Now leſt any ſhould miſunderſtand and miſapply his words, as if he ſpake concerning outward baptiſm, or waſhing, he explaineth himſelf in the following words: "Not" (ſaith he) "the putting away of the "filth of the fleſh, not the outward waſhing of the "body," that is not it that ſaves; but that baptiſm which cauſeth the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. For this is the effect of the inward baptiſm; ſin being waſhed away by the water of life, by the blood of the Lamb, that which is new, that which is renewed, riſeth up out of the water which waſheth away ſin; and then the pure and good conſcience anſwers to God, and the ſoul knows and partakes of both the death and reſurrection of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and ſo being baptized by the one baptiſm, even the baptiſm of Chriſt, into the one body, comes into the ſtate and fellowſhip of the living. Another apoſtle alſo ſpeaketh of the inward waſhing, even the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt; by which, ſaith he, "God according to his mercy ſaved us," Tit. iii. 5.

The apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of a "circumciſion made "without hands," and tells wherein it conſiſts; to wit, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh:

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and ſheweth how this is effected; namely, not by Moſes's circumciſion, but by the circumciſion of Chriſt, Col. ii. 21. And truly they who are thus circumciſed, are the true circumciſion, the ſpiritual circumciſion, who worſhip God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the fleſh, but rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, who thus circumciſeth them. Now in the next verſe he ſpeaketh of baptiſm, "of being buried with Chriſt in baptiſm, "and of riſing with him in the ſame, through the "faith of the operation of God, who raiſed him from "the dead." What is this baptiſm? Is it inferior to the circumciſion before ſpoken of? Is it not without hands alſo? What is it that buries into the death of Chriſt; that raiſeth into the life of Chriſt through the faith of the operation of God? Is not this the one ſpiritual and heavenly baptiſm, wherewith the one body is baptized by the one Spirit? What doth outward circumciſion avail? Doth it avail any thing? What doth outward waſhing avail? Doth it avail any more than outward circumciſion? But the inward circumciſion of the Jew inward, and the inward waſhing of the ſoul from ſin, doth avail very much.

Now for that place, Matt. xxviii. 19. where Chriſt expreſly commandeth baptizing, it is a queſtion very weighty, and worthy duly to be conſidered, what baptiſm he there commandeth. For if it be outward baptiſm, they greatly err who apprehend it to be the inward and ſpiritual baptiſm; but if it be the inward and ſpiritual baptiſm which Chriſt intended in thoſe words, then they greatly err who apprehend it to be the outward. Now conſider the words in the fear and weight of God's Spirit.

It is ſaid, "Go teach, baptizing;" but it is not ſaid, "baptizing with water, but in the name," or rather (as the Greek is) "into the name of the Father, "and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt."

Now to baptize with water is one thing, and to baptize into the name is another; as they who experience the ſpiritual baptiſm know it to be. For the word of faith turns men from Satan to the power of life;

life; and then as they receive the power, and are made partakers of the power, they are baptized into the power and virtue of life; and ſo they are buried (ſo far as they come into Chriſt) by the power of his Spirit, with this heavenly baptiſm, into death unto ſin, and by the ſame power are made alive unto righteouſneſs; and ſo the name of the Lord, the name of the Father, Son and Spirit, comes over them, and they riſe up in it unto life and righteouſneſs, and ſo are dead unto ſin, and alive unto God. Now any outward circumciſing or waſhing can be but a figure of this; but the inward circumciſing and waſhing is the thing itſelf. For Chriſt ſent not his able miniſters of the New Teſtament to miniſter the letter, or to miniſter the figures of things; but to miniſter the Spirit (elſe how were they able miniſters of the Spirit?) to miniſter the ſubſtance; not to miniſter a circumciſion or baptiſm which might be ſhaken and paſs away, as outward and elementary, but to miniſter the circumciſion and baptiſm which cannot be ſhaken; which is the circumciſion and baptiſm of the goſpel, the circumciſion and baptiſm of the Spirit, the circumciſion and baptiſm of the kingdom, which is never to be ſhaken and paſs away as elementary, but to ſtand and abide for ever. Read Heb. xii. 26, 27, 28. and conſider how all elementary and outward things which could be ſhaken, were to be ſhaken and paſs away; that thoſe things which were of an higher nature (even of the nature of the kingdom), might remain and be eſtabliſhed in their ſtead.

And indeed as the inward circumciſion could not be throughly and alone eſtabliſhed while the figure thereof remained, the ſame may be truly ſaid concerning the inward baptiſm; ſo that by this it may appear, that the baptiſm of water cannot be the baptiſm which Chriſt intended in this place, becauſe the baptiſm here ſpoken of was to continue to the end of the world; but the baptiſm of water is plainly of ſuch an outward elementary nature, as might be ſhaken as well as circumciſion, and ſo was to be ſhaken in due time,

time, that that which could not be ſhaken might remain. Read alſo Rev. xi. 12. where it is plainly ſignified, under that phraſe of the outward court being left out of God's meaſure, and given to the Gentiles, that things of ſuch a nature were ſhaken; and ſo were thoſe that were not the true and ſpiritual worſhippers in God's ſight. For they are Jews under the goſpel who are Jews inwardly; and they who are not Jews inwardly, are by God's Spirit numbered amongſt the Gentiles. And conſider how not only the notorious Heathen, but ſuch as had got "the form of godlineſs, "but denied the power thereof," were rejected, with their outſide ſhadows, as really as outward Jeruſalem was rejected to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles.

Obj. 1. *But againſt this it is objected, that the baptiſm of the Spirit cannot be the baptiſm ſpoken of in this place, becauſe the baptiſm ſpoken of in this place is commanded; but the baptiſm of the Spirit was never commanded, nor was it any man's ſin not to be ſo baptized.*

Anſ. Surely this is a great miſtake. Was the inward waſhing of the heart never commanded? "Rent "your hearts, and not your garments." What is this but the ſpiritual baptiſm? The goſpel is a miniſtration of inward things, and the inward things are ſtrictly commanded there. Can any man be ſaved without inward baptizing? and is he not commanded to receive inward baptizing? and doth he not ſin, if he do not wait to receive it, and give up his heart and ſoul to be baptized by God's Holy Spirit? If the eye were opened in people to look into the goſpel-miniſtration, and into the inward nature of things, this might eaſily be demonſtrated to the leaſt babe there. For as the goſpel was before the law, and could not be diſannulled by the law; ſo this miniſtration of the Spirit's baptiſm (for nature and kind) was long before John's baptiſm, and could not be diſannulled by any outward miniſtration of baptiſm, but abideth the ſame for ever; and is to have its place in the goſpel-ſtate, where the figures and ſhadows of things paſs away, and that which

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is true, lasting and substantial, filleth up the room thereof.

Now the baptism of the Spirit, or the spiritual washing and circumcising the heart (which is all one in substance), was called for and required of the Jews under the law; and it was their sin not to answer God's call and requiring therein. Consider these scriptures following, with many more of the like nature; "Break "up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns," Jer. iv. 3. Can the fallow ground be broken up, and the thorns rooted out (else the sowing will be amongst them), without the circumcision or baptism of the Spirit, which is all one in nature or ground? Again: "Circumcise the foreskin of your hearts, and be no "more stiff-necked," Deut. x. 16. "Make you a "new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, "O house of Israel!" Ezek. xviii. 31. (Is not this all one in substance with that scripture, "He that be-"lieveth and is baptized, shall be saved?) O Jeru-"salem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou "mayest be saved! How long shall thy vain thoughts "lodge within thee!" Jer. iv. 14. "Wash ye, make "you clean, put away the evil of your doings from "before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do "well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge "the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, "and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though "your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as "snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall "be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall "eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, "ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth "of the Lord hath spoken it," Isai. i. 16. to 21.

Is not here the true baptism, and the remission of sins, which ensueth thereupon, with the blessing on the baptized estate, and the curse on the unbaptized, which extendeth both to Jew and Gentile? for with God *there is no respect of persons.*

Oh! that men could read the scriptures of truth, with the true spirit and with the true understanding! For

For theſe things which were written to the people of the Jews, were written for our learning; and precious things may be learned from the ſcriptures, by thoſe whoſe eyes are opened by the Lord, and who keep cloſe in their reading to that which anointeth and openeth the eye; whereas others cannot but miſunderſtand and wreſt them, to their own great danger at leaſt, if not to the ruin and deſtruction of their ſouls.

I ſhall here mention but one place more, which is that of Pſal. li. 17. "The ſacrifices of God are a "broken ſpirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, "thou wilt not deſpiſe." Can any offer up the ſacrifice to God, but he who is inwardly and ſpiritually waſhed from that which defileth and hardeneth? And doth not God require this baptiſm? And what is this but the baptiſm of the Spirit? who thus waſheth the ſoul with his heavenly water, in the miniſtration of his word and power, when the virtue and efficacy thereof reacheth the heart, in and through the faith.

Obj. 2. *The baptiſm of the Spirit cannot be here intended, becauſe this baptiſm is to be adminiſtered by men; but the baptiſm of the Spirit was never adminiſtered by men; Jeſus Chriſt was the alone miniſter of this baptiſm.*

Anſ. The apoſtle ſaith, "that God had made them "able miniſters of the New Teſtament; not of the "letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but "the Spirit giveth life," 2 Cor. iii. 6.

Mark; They were made able miniſters by God, of that which giveth life: and that they did miniſter the Spirit by impoſition of hands, is manifeſt, Acts xix. 6. and in many other ſcriptures.

Indeed the apoſtles were not able of themſelves, or by any virtue or ſtrength of their own, to beget men to God, or to baptize men into his name and power; but their ſufficiency was of God.

Again, Paul was ſent to the Gentiles, to open their eyes. Acts xxvi. 18. Now, opening the eyes of the blind is as peculiar to Chriſt, as baptizing with the Spirit can be.

When

When Chriſt gave his apoſtles commiſſion to teach, baptizing, he told them, "All power in heaven and "earth was given him;" and bid them not "depart "from Jeruſalem, but wait for the promiſe of the "Father: for John truly baptized with water, but ye "ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt not many days "hence;" and that then they ſhould receive power. What to do? To baptize with water? or to baptize into the name with the ſame baptiſm wherewith they themſelves were baptized? See Matt. xxviii. and Acts i.

Now if this commiſſion (here given to the apoſtles, Matt. xxviii. 16. &c.) was to baptize with water, then Paul was inferior to the other apoſtles: for he, though he had ſeen the Lord, and was ſent from him to open the eyes of the Gentiles; yet he was not ſent to baptize with water, as he expreſsly ſaith: "He "was not ſent to baptize" (that is, outwardly with water) "but to preach the goſpel." But if the baptiſm intended by Chriſt was inward and ſpiritual, even into the name, virtue, life, and power of the Spirit, then Paul had the apoſtolick commiſſion as fully as any of the reſt, and the grace and power of God did work as mightily in him to this end, as in any of them.

But men are as much miſtaken about the teaching required by this commiſſion, as about this baptiſm: for this teaching is not a literal teaching of things, or a diſcipline into an outward knowledge and way, but a teaching in the Spirit and power; and him whom God enableth ſo to do, he alſo enableth to baptize into the ſame Spirit and power. Yea, indeed, when the life and power miniſters (the word ſpoken being mixed with faith in them that hear), it brings the earthly part under, and brings the life and power of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt over the heart and ſpirit. And this is the true baptiſm, and the ſubſtance of the figure or ſhadow, which was before the figure either of baptiſm or circumciſion was, and remains when they are gone.

Obj. 3.

Obj. 3. *This baptiſm in the commiſſion was to all nations; but the baptiſm of the Spirit fell only on ſome few at the beginning.*

Anſ. The promiſe of receiving the Spirit is upon believing, and it extendeth to every one that believeth. "He that believeth on me," as the ſcripture hath ſaid, "out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living "water;" but this ſpake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive, John vii. 38, 39.

Anſwerably Peter ſaid to that great aſſembly to which he preached, whereof there were added about three thouſand ſouls, "Repent and be baptized every "one of you, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the "remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of "the Holy Ghoſt: for the promiſe is unto you, and "to your children, and to all that are afar off, even "as many as the Lord our God ſhall call," Acts ii. 38, 39.

Indeed ſeveral gifts of the Spirit were given (ſome to one, ſome to another, according to the pleaſure of the giver) and diverſities of manifeſtations and operations of the ſame inward life and power: but every one received ſo much of the Spirit as to make him a ſon, and to cry *Abba, Father*, and to waſh him.

And this is the one waſhing which all the flock are waſhed with, and ſo baptized into the one, pure, living body: and this is the ſubſtance of the figure, which ſubſtance belongs to the goſpel-ſtate; though God alſo ſaw an uſe of ſome figures in that day, and ſo inclined their hearts then to make uſe of them, which his gathered ſons and daughters (by the goſpel-ſpirit and power in this day) would make uſe of alſo, if the Lord did ſo require them. For the Lord is our judge, and the Lord is our king, the Lord is our lawgiver; who by his Spirit and power determines in every age what he would have his people do; and who leads into the way of life, truth, and holineſs, which always was and is but one and the ſame for ever.

And what if the Lord, who hath cauſed his everlaſting day to dawn again, and the everlaſting goſpel to

be preached again, will have every ſhadow and figure to fly away (ſeeing they are but one elementary nature and uſe, and not everlaſting and abiding); who may gainſay him herein, and ſay, that this is not the miniſtration of the everlaſting ſubſtance, or the ſame goſpel the apoſtles preached, becauſe ſome ſhadows which they expect, and have a ſtrong belief concerning, are not found herein?

Obj. 4. *The baptiſm in this commiſſion cannot be the baptiſm of the Spirit, becauſe it is to be adminiſtered in the name of the Spirit.*

Anſ. The Greek word is not ἐν, which ſignifieth *in*; but εἰς, which ſignifies *into:* ſo that the baptiſm here commanded is to baptize into the name, into the Father's name, into the Son's name, into the Spirit's name, by turning them from darkneſs to light, from the power of Satan to God; and then the power and life of God's holy Spirit comes over their hearts and minds, and breaketh the power of Satan, and waſheth their conſciences from that which is dead, and plungeth or dippeth them into that which is living.

Now as God made them able miniſters of the New Teſtament (which is a ſpiritual miniſtry, an inward miniſtry), and gave them the heavenly treaſure of life and of his Spirit to miniſter with; ſo he required and expected of them the work of the ſpiritual miniſtry, which was the ſpiritual teaching and ſpiritual baptizing into the inward name.

But that there was alſo a baptizing with outward water, that I do not deny; and that it was of uſe, as a type to the weak and ceremonious ſtate the Jews were in (when Chriſt ſent forth his apoſtles to gather them out of the law-ſtate into the goſpel-ſtate) I am alſo ſatisfied in: but it hath been ſince corrupted, and ſet up above its place by apoſtates; and every one ſhould conſider and wait on the Lord, to know what God requires and will accept of him. For the kingdom of God ſtands not in meats or drinks, or any outward waſhings, nor comes in the way of man's obſervation, but in an heavenly ſeed, and in the Holy Spirit

Spirit and power of life; which, happy are they who are made partakers of, baptized with, and led by. God will try every man's religion, work and practices, by the true reed or meaſuring line: bleſſed is he whoſe religion will bear that trial!

It is a great matter to know the goſpel-ſtate and miniſtration, the goſpel-Spirit and power, the goſpel-church and ordinances, the words of the holy prophets concerning the day of the goſpel, the words of Chriſt concerning the kingdom and power of God, the words of the apoſtles concerning the myſtery of faith, and the Word which was from the beginning.

Theſe are weighty things, and of great concernment, about which men may eaſily miſs and wreſt the ſcriptures, unleſs they be enlightened by the Lord in the renewing of their minds, and their eye kept to the holy anointing, that they may not out-run (and ſo imagine and conceive of themſelves according to their own ability of underſtanding), but know and keep to the gift and inſpiration of the Almighty, which giveth true underſtanding. For as no man knoweth the mind of a man, but man's own ſpirit within him; ſo the mind of God (in the words which his Spirit ſpake), no man knoweth but his Spirit. And there is a key of knowledge to open the words of ſcripture by, which they cannot be opened without; I mean, ſuch ſcriptures as relate to the myſtery of life and ſalvation, which was always hid from the wiſe and prudent in every age.

The Phariſees had got a great deal of knowledge and underſtanding of the law of God, and prophecies of things to come, from the words of Moſes and the prophets; but they had not the key of knowledge; and "ſo they erred, not knowing the ſcriptures" (notwithſtanding all their diligent reading and ſtudying them), nor the power of God.

Every one had need be wary leſt he err after the ſame manner, and ſo ſet up his own apprehenſions from the ſcriptures, inſtead of God's truth and the mind of his Holy Spirit; for then he cannot but alſo

oppoſe that which is indeed his truth, and truly agreeable to the ſcriptures, though to man's miſ-biaſſed judgment it may ſeem different or contrary.

The Lord beget in peoples hearts true deſires after himſelf, and guide them into the way wherein they may obtain all the deſires of their ſouls, which he begets in them; and the Lord preſerve all that fear him, from claſhing againſt the preſent diſpenſation of his life and power in their day and generation!

The Phariſees little thought they would have killed the prophets, had they lived in their days: nay, they greatly condemned their fathers for ſo doing; and yet they themſelves crucified Chriſt. And many now little think they would have crucified Chriſt, had they lived in the days of his fleſh; and yet they diſdain, reproach, and perſecute the appearance of the ſame Spirit, life and power, as it now appeareth in the ſaints, whom he hath redeemed and dwelleth in, and in whom he manifeſteth himſelf, preacheth and ſuffereth, whatever men think of them.

Oh! bleſſed are they that are not offended in Chriſt, in the preſent appearance of his life and power! For they are not offended at him who gives life in the Father's name to all that receive him and wait upon him, and worſhip in the quickenings and virtue of his Spirit.

XXI.

Some Queſtions anſwered, concerning the Gentiles *doing by Nature the Things contained in the Law; and ſo ſhewing the Work of the Law written in their Hearts,* Rom. ii. 14, 15.

Queſt. 1. *BY what nature did the Gentiles the things contained in the law? By the enlightened or unenlightened nature? By nature, as it lieth corrupted in the fall, or by nature in ſome meaſure renewed by the light of God's Spirit ſhining in the heart? And by what covenant was the law written in their hearts? Is not the writing*

writing of the law in the heart a promiſe of the new covenant? And can it be writ in any heart, but by virtue of the new covenant? Is not the leaſt writing of the law in the heart a degree of the promiſe? For the old covenant contains only the law in the letter; but the new covenant contains the writing of the law in the heart by the Spirit.

Anſ. The apoſtle had ſhewed before, that that which might be known of God was manifeſt in them, for God had ſhewed it unto them; ſo that they had a manifeſtation of the light of God's Spirit in them, whereby they might diſcern his eternal power and godhead, in or by the things made; for that which is viſible ſhadows out and declares that which is inviſible, which the inward eye ſees, being opened by the Lord.

Now their hearts being joined to this manifeſtation of God within, it changeth the heart and nature; and in the changed heart and nature, God writes his law; and the law being writ in any meaſure in the heart, it hath ſome power upon man, to cauſe him to ſubject to it, and anſwer what God requires of him thereby; and ſo his heart and conſcience will accuſe him, or excuſe him, as he is found anſwering or rebelling againſt the holy light and law of God's Spirit within, manifeſting the will of God unto him. For God, though he peculiarly choſe the Jews, and in that ſenſe had caſt off the Gentiles, not chooſing them ſo to be his peculiar people, yet he was not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles alſo; and had a care of their precious ſouls, viſiting them with that light, and inward manifeſtation of his Spirit, which was able to ſave and deliver them from the darkneſs. And it is teſtified, they came thus far by this inward manifeſtation of God in their hearts, and what God had ſhewed them thereby, that they knew God, Rom. i. 21. They had a true knowledge of God from the light within; they had a meaſure of the pure and heavenly gift: but they were not thankful for ſo great a gift, in their dark ſtate; and when they came to ſome true knowledge, did not glorify God, according to what they knew of the Lord, from the light of his

Spirit within; but ran out from the meaſure of the gift into imaginations, into the conceivings of their own wiſdom; and this brought darkneſs upon them, and gave deceit power over their hearts.

Now, if they had not profeſſed themſelves to be wiſe, but kept low to the manifeſtation of God's Spirit, and denied their own wiſdom, they might have been truly wiſe; but running out from the meaſure of the gift, into their own wiſdom and thoughts, they became fools as to the true wiſdom, and wandered into groſs idolatrous conceptions, and brought great judgments from God upon themſelves. *And this was their condemnation* (not that the light of God had not ſhone in their hearts; not that that which might be known of God was not manifeſt in them; but) *that they loved their own dark wiſdom, thoughts, and conceivings, more than the manifeſtation of the light of God's Spirit within.*

Queſt. 2. *But if God was the God of the Gentiles, and thus viſited them, were any of them ſaved thereby? Did not all the Gentiles univerſally periſh, notwithſtanding this light, or manifeſtation of God's Spirit within?*

Anſ. God forbid, that the inward manifeſtation of his light and viſitation of his Holy Spirit, ſhould be of no effect to none of the Gentiles; but that they ſhould all periſh notwithſtanding it! It is teſtified here, that ſome of them came ſo far as to have their nature changed, ſo that they were a law to themſelves, and did by nature the things contained in the law; which it is impoſſible for corrupt fallen man to do. And theſe hearkening to that, and following that which led them thus far, could not chuſe but like to retain God in their knowledge, which the generality (who followed their own wiſdom) did not; whereupon God gave them over to a *reprobate mind*, ver. 28.

But now, thoſe that had the law written in their hearts, and anſwered it, fearing God, and working righteouſneſs, and liking to retain God in their knowledge, ſuch God did not give up to a reprobate mind, but kept them ſavoury to himſelf, and made them

more

more and more partakers of the true and inward circumcision; so that their want of outward circumcision was no hinderance to them as to acceptance with God, but their uncircumcision went with God for circumcision.

And this their state (from the inward life and power) judged the Jew, who boasted so much of his state, because of the letter of the law, and outward circumcision, Rom. ii. 26, 27. Yea, this state shall be justified by God, when "God cometh to judge the "secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my "gospel" said Paul, ver. 16. Jesus Christ is the judge, who will justify whatever his Spirit hath made known of God the Father in the hearts of the Gentiles, and them in their sense thereof, and subjection thereto.

That man who hath bowed to the Spirit, been taught by the Spirit (having had the law of God written in his heart), and learned obedience in the new nature, so as to do the things contained in the law, and hath received the inward circumcision, which cutteth off, teacheth to deny, and keep down that which is corrupt; which will never answer the law, nor suffer the man in whom it rules to answer it; I say, he that cometh into the sense of God's Spirit, and the law thereof, and into the denial of his own spirit, he bears that which in substance is the cross of Christ, which crucifieth the worldly nature and spirit; and as he is truly circumcised, so must he needs also be justified and saved under this yoke. For the Lord God of life, the Father of glory, will condemn none whom he finds in Christ, subjected to Christ, one in nature with the image of his Son; and Christ will condemn none whom he finds in his Spirit, taught by his Spirit, receiving holy laws from his Spirit, and walking in obedience thereto. And indeed I doubt not, but the merciful God hath saved many among the Gentiles, in all ages and generations, by the light of his Holy Spirit working their minds into the sense thereof, and into subjection thereto, according to the manifestation thereof within them. For it is not the having much knowledge that saves, but the being subject to the

measure of the gift which comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour.

Quest. 3. *But how can those be justified according to Paul's gospel, who never heard Paul's gospel?*

Ans. Paul's gospel is the gospel of Christ, the everlasting gospel, the one gospel, which is the power which saves, which is manifested in the new covenant within; which is hid in them that are lost, but revealed, in some measure, in all that are saved. Whereever the new covenant is, there is the gospel; whereever the law is in any measure written within, there is somewhat of the gospel.

If a man believe in that which shines within, which manifests the will of God within, he believes in that power which raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave; and if he lay hold on it by faith, he lays hold on God's strength, which inwardly visits to save the soul; yea, and if he obey it, he obeys the gospel, and shall not be condemned for disobedience, when Christ appears in flames of fire, to judge and condemn all the ungodly.

XXII.

Concerning the Rule of the Children of the New Covenant.

WHAT was the rule of the Jew outward, as to their outward state? Was not the law and testimony outward? Did not God make the law in the letter? What is the rule of the Jew inward? Is not the law and testimony inward? Is not the gospel a ministration of Spirit and power? And is it not a more glorious ministration than the law of the letter? Under the law, God spake by Moses and the prophets; but under the gospel he speaketh by his Son: and do not the sheep hear his Son's (the true Shepherd's) voice? We all, like sheep, have gone astray; but (blessed be the Lord) are now returned to the Shepherd and *Bishop of our souls:* and shall we not hear him,

him, and follow him, whitherſoever he goes and leads by his holy and good Spirit? "A prophet ſhall the "Lord your God raiſe up unto you, like unto me; "him ſhall ye hear in all things," ſaid Moſes. Did Moſes ſay, My words ſhall be your rule; or the words of the prophets ſhall be your rule then, in the days of the new covenant? Nay, he did not ſay ſo; but, "him ſhall ye hear in all things;" and he that will not hear him ſhall be cut off; yea, verily, it is ſo. He is the miniſter of life; and he that doth not hear him, and receive life, virtue, and power from him, he builds but from the letter (from what he apprehends from the letter) but is really ſeparated and cut off from the miniſtry of the life and power. "He "that hath an ear, let him hear; and he that hath an heart, let him conſider.

Now, the true Jew, the Jew inward, in whoſe heart God writes his law by the finger of his Spirit, he is to read and to meditate on the inward law written in his heart, as the outward Jew was to read and meditate on the outward law. And as, in obedience to the outward law, the outward Jew was bleſſed, and free from the curſe, and his outward enemies; ſo, in obedience to the inward law (the law of the Spirit of life), the inward Jew reaps the ſpiritual bleſſings, and becomes inwardly free from his inward and ſpiritual enemies. "Ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth "ſhall make you free," ſaid Chriſt to his diſciples; and every true diſciple in the obedience of the truth witneſſeth it.

And here the myſtery of all (which was outwardly written and teſtified of) is known; the myſtery of the law, the myſtery of the prophecies, the myſtery of the goſpel, the myſtery of the fellowſhip in and with the ſaints in light; the myſtery of the faith, which is held in a pure conſcience; the myſtery of the love, which ariſeth from the true and inward circumciſion; the myſtery of the hope, which anchors within the veil, and purifies the heart, *as he is pure*. For the true children, the children of the heavenly wiſdom, being

being children of the hidden life, are begotten in a myſtery; for the Spirit of God breatheth upon them no man knoweth how; and thus is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Now as they are begotten in the myſtery of life, ſo the myſtery belongs to them, and is revealed and opened in them; inſomuch that they know God not only as outwardly deſcribed, but as inwardly revealed and manifeſted in Chriſt, his bright and heavenly image.

So here the one truth is known, *even as it is in Jeſus*; the one way is known; the one name of the Lord (which is and was the ſtrong tower in all ages and generations, which the righteous did, and do ſtill, fly unto and are ſafe) is known; here the one baptiſm is known; here the one ſupper is known: yea, here the One God is worſhipped, as Father and Son, in the One Spirit and truth. So that here is no dreaming in the night, by mens comprehendings and conceivings upon the ſcriptures; but here is ſeeing with the true eye, in a meaſure of the light of the everlaſting day, which is given to the children of light, who live in the light, and walk in the light, and in the true light (which now ſhines) ſee the pure and eternal light daily more and more.

Who would not count all droſs and dung (even all the knowledge he can gather and comprehend of himſelf) for the excellency of this knowledge which God gives to thoſe that are turned to the light and power of his Spirit, from the darkneſs of their own thoughts, reaſonings, and conceivings upon the ſcriptures, and do wait upon him therein, even in his holy temple, night and day? For all under the goſpel are to be prieſts to God; and all his prieſts are to wait upon him, and worſhip him in his holy temple; and to watch diligently that neither the fire go out, nor the lamp go out, nor the ſalt be wanting to ſeaſon and keep the heart melted and broken, that it may be a continual acceptable ſacrifice to the Lord.

Time

Time was, when we alſo did believe that the ſcriptures were the only *rule of faith and practice*; and ſo bent ourſelves to ſearch out and obſerve what we found written therein, hoping thereby to have attained to that, which our ſouls deſired after. But we found all the directions thereof weak as to us, through the fleſh, and ſin had ſtill power over us; and we knew not what it was to be made free by the Son; free by the truth, free indeed from that which ſtood near to tempt and draw us into ſin. But when the light of God's Holy Spirit ſhined upon us, and our minds were by him turned thereto, and his law written on our hearts, in and by the new covenant, which he revealed in us, and made with us, in and through his Son; then we felt the miniſtration of the power of the endleſs life, and were experimentally aſſured, that in the goſpel-adminiſtration, which is an adminiſtration of the Spirit and power, nothing leſs than Spirit and power can be the rule.

Mark; In the old covenant, letter (or outward directions) was a rule; but the living commandment, or Word in the heart, is the rule in the new covenant; living laws; laws livingly written; laws that give life to them in whom they are written; they are the living, powerful, and effectual rule.

Nor do we undervalue the ſcriptures, in thus giving honour to Chriſt and his Spirit; for it is their honour to teſtify of Chriſt and of his Spirit, who is the pure, certain, infallible rule of the new life, and who gives to fulfill all the holy directions, which are written in the ſcriptures, concerning the way of life.

A man, at a diſtance, may eaſily ſpeak uncertainly; but let a man be joined to God's Spirit, and feel his holy nature, movings, leadings, and guidings, he cannot but acknowledge them to be his certain and infallible rule; for nothing is more certain than God's Spirit, than the holy anointing, which is truth and no lie, *and leads into all truth, and out of every lie and deceit.*

XXIII.

Some Queries concerning the Law, or Word; Statutes, Teſtimonies, Judgments, &c. which David was ſo delighted in, and prayed ſo earneſtly for.

DAVID ſaid, "Thy Word is a lantern to my "feet, and a light to my paths." He found it "ſweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb." He deſired *to be taught God's ſtatutes, and to learn the way of his precepts*, &c. as may be abundantly read, Pſal. xix. and in other places.

Query 1. What was this Word or Law, which there was ſuch an earneſt deſire in David after; by obſerving whereof he became wiſer than his teachers? Was it the law of Moſes, the law outward; or was it the Word and Law of life inward?

If it be ſaid, *It was the law of Moſes*; then I query in the ſecond place:

Query 2. What rule had David from the law of Moſes to ſay, *That God deſired not ſacrifice, nor delighted in burnt-offerings?* Did not God deſire and require of his people under the law, that they ſhould perform theſe things? And did he not accept of them, and delight in them, when they performed them aright in faith and obedience to him? Was not the Lord pleaſed with Abel's ſacrifice? And did not God ſmell a ſweet ſavour in Noah's ſacrifice? How could David ſay in truth, and from a true Spirit, *that God did neither deſire them, nor delight in them?*

Query 3. Ought not David to try this Spirit, which ſpake thus in him, whether it was of God or no? Should he receive a teſtimony from any Spirit ſo directly contrary in appearance to the foregoing teſtimonies of God's Spirit in the holy ſcriptures, without a full and certain evidence and demonſtration that it was the Spirit of God?

Query 4. How was David to try, or how might he certainly try this Spirit, whether it was of God or no?

Was

Was he to try it thus, whether it ſpake according to the teſtimony and law of Moſes, according to what Moſes had ſpoken in this matter, which certainly was of God, and was given by God for a law or rule to that people the Jews? If he had tried it thus, would he *not* have judged it a ſpirit different from the Spirit of Moſes, ſpeaking contrary to the law and teſtimonies which God gave forth by him? For ſacrifice and burnt-offering was ſtrictly required there, and God often teſtified his acceptance thereof, and delight therein. So that God did accept and did delight therein in one reſpect, and did not accept nor delight at all in them, in another reſpect; but his aim was at another thing, and at other ſacrifices, which David clearly ſaw. And ſo David's eye, mind, heart, and ſpirit being gathered inward, even thither where God's eye and heart was, he there had a clear ſight, and gave a certain ſound concerning what was acceptable in the eye of the Lord, and what not; and ſo ſaith, "God "did not deſire ſacrifice, nor delight in burnt-offer-"ing," Pſal. li. 16. Though the language of the law of Moſes ſpeaketh far otherwiſe, where circumciſion, ſacrifices, and ſuch outward things are expreſſed as of great value with the Lord, and as great and high privileges, which were beſtowed upon that people in that day.

Query 5. May not the ſame Spirit, or the children of God in the ſame Spirit, ſay to the Lord in this day, concerning things of the ſame outward nature, *Thou deſireſt not ſuch outward things, elſe would we perform them. Thou delighteſt not in outward ſhadows of the things of the kingdom. Thou deſireſt not outward waſhing the body with water, or eating and drinking of outward bread and wine, which avail no more than circumciſion and the paſſover. If thy delight were in things of this nature, and thou didſt require them of us, how willingly would we be found in the practice of them before thee: but thy delight is in that water which waſheth the ſoul from its filth, and in the ſouls that are waſhed therewith. And thou deſireſt to ſee thy children feeding on the living bread, the bread which*

which comes down from heaven, and to drink of the wine which refreſheth, and maketh glad the heart both of God and man.

Query 6. If any of the children of the Moſt High ſhould in this feel the life wherewith God hath quickened them open in their hearts, and ſuch a teſtimony ariſing from his Spirit in them, how ſhould they try whether this ſpirit and voice were of God or no? Should they look into the writings of the evangeliſts and apoſtles, to ſee whether baptiſm with outward water, and eating of outward bread, and drinking of outward wine, was ever commanded and practiſed in the apoſtles days? And if they ſuppoſe ſtrongly that it was commanded, or find it was practiſed, may they thereupon ſafely conclude that it is a wrong ſpirit, and wrong voice, that teſtifieth thus in them, and not the voice and Spirit of the Lord? Had David tried and judged thus, might not he have judged and condemned the Spirit and voice of God in his day? And if we try and judge in this manner, may not we judge and condemn the Spirit and voice of God in our day? David ſaw clearly that outward ſacrifices were not the abiding thing, but ſignifications of that which was abiding; and this ſight greatly ſhook them in his ſpirit. The Lord hath likewiſe ſhewn us clearly that outward water, bread, and wine, are not the ſubſtantial, the ſpiritual, the heavenly water, the heavenly bread and wine; but of the nature of ſuch things as were to be ſhaken, that thoſe things which cannot be ſhaken, may remain in the goſpel ſtate and kingdom.

Oh! therefore, let men take heed how they build, or how they judge concerning the appearances of God, by their own apprehenſions upon the letter of the ſcriptures. But let every one be careful to build upon the rock Chriſt; upon his Spirit, his life, his power inwardly revealed, which the birth which is of him knows; and that birth being kept to, reveals in and to us; but no man, by his own conceivings and apprehenſions upon the letter, ever knew, or can know, the Spirit and voice of the Lord.

And

And thus men may come, waiting here in humility and fear upon the Lord, to judge true and righteous judgment concerning the appearances of God, and the things of his kingdom; which they can never do by their own underſtanding, and comprehending things from the ſcriptures, out of the light and quickening life of God's Spirit. For man is dead, dark, and corrupt, but as he is quickened, enlightened, and his heart ſanctified by God's Holy Spirit. What can a dead man ſee? What can a dead man hear? Can he hear the living ſound before he is quickened by it? Do not the ſcriptures relate, and treat of, ſpiritual things? And can the natural man underſtand them? Can man's unholy mind underſtand the words of God's pure Holy Spirit, which were given forth through veſſels that were ſanctified (ſome from the womb), and when the Spirit of the Lord was upon them, and they gathered by his Spirit into an holy living ſenſe?

Oh! that men ſaw their need of the Lord to open their hearts, and that fleſh might be ſilent in them, that they might come to witneſs the birth of God's Spirit, and the precious underſtanding of the heavenly things which is therein given! And then that underſtanding which is not precious, nor living, nor of God, but of themſelves, would not be of ſo great value with them: for indeed, through this great miſtake, many (ſome whereof are zealous and knowing, according to the eſteem of men) reject *that* which is of God, and ſet up *that* which is of themſelves, even of their own apprehending and conceiving; which will be bitterneſs and ſorrow in the latter end, when that eye ſhall be opened in them, which is at preſent cloſed in too too many.

Bleſſed is he who can truly ſay, *The Lord hath opened an eye in me, even the true eye, the pure eye, the living eye; and with that eye I now ſee; but with the eye wherewith I ſaw before, I now ſee not: and now I know the difference between ſeeing the ſame things with mine own eye, and with the eye which God has given me. So that now my earneſt deſire and prayer to the Lord is, to keep open in me for*

for ever that eye which he hath opened; and alſo to keep that eye ſhut, which he in his tender mercy to me hath been pleaſed to cloſe up in me.

And truly this is the ground of the great difference between us and others, about the things of God; for though we own the ſame things, and ſpeak of the ſame things, yet we own them not alike, nor ſpeak of them alike. Why ſo? Becauſe we ſee them with different eyes, and ſo have a different ſenſe of them.

Others call things true, and ſo acknowledge them as they apprehend them from the letter: we call things true, as they are demonſtrated to us by God's Spirit, and as we feel the virtue, life, and power of them from God, in our hearts.

Now this we are aſſured is the true way of knowledge; therefore is it our hearts deſire (in true love to all, eſpecially to thoſe in whom there are any tender breathings after God), that people might ſo wait upon the Lord, as that they might be led by him into it, and quickened daily more and more by him in it.

And indeed thoſe teachings and demonſtrations of truth, which are given and received in the pure ſenſe, and in the quickening life, they are the teachings of God's Spirit according to the new covenant; which is a miniſtration not of the letter (no, not of thoſe ſhadowy or dead things which are adminiſtered therein), but of the power and life. For the law is letter, but the goſpel is Spirit and power. The goſpel-ſtate is a ſtate of fulfilling thoſe things in the Spirit and power of the endleſs life, in the new covenant, which were ſpoken of, promiſed, and ſhadowed out under the law in the old covenant.

XXIV.

Some Obſervations on 2 PET. iii. 14, 15, 16.

" Wherefore beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch " things, be diligent; that ye may be found of " him in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs. And " account that the long-ſuffering of our Lord is " ſalvation; even as our beloved brother Paul alſo, " according to the wiſdom given unto him, hath " written unto you: as alſo in all his epiſtles; " ſpeaking in them of theſe things; in which are " ſome things hard to be underſtood, which they " that are unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as they do " alſo the other ſcriptures, unto their own de- " ſtruction."

Obſ. 1. WHAT Peter, Paul, and the reſt of the holy men of God wrote of. They wrote of the *grace of the goſpel:* they wrote of the *ſufferings of Chriſt*, and the *glory that ſhould follow, and the ſalvation of the ſoul*; and the true reſt, which believers ſhould receive, and enter into in him, 1 Pet. i. 2, &c. and Heb. iv. 39. They wrote concerning the *times of reformation*, wherein thoſe things ſhould be reformed under the ſecond covenant, which had been amiſs under the firſt, Heb. viii. They wrote of the *times of reſtitution, and refreſhing from the preſence of the Lord*, Acts iii. 19, 21. For in the new covenant there is a renewing and reſtoring; and the pure preſence of God, which refreſheth, is witneſſed and enjoyed there. They wrote of the everlaſting kingdom, the *kingdom which cannot be ſhaken*, Heb. xii. 28. which ſtands in that power which ſhakes all things that may be ſhaken, but itſelf is unmoveable. They wrote of the *day of the Lord*, the *day of the goſpel*, which brings darkneſs and confuſion upon man's ſpirit and glory, and deſolation upon his buildings, melting and diſſolving the old heavens and the old earth, wherein unrighteouſneſs

had a place, and bringing forth the *new heavens* and the *new earth*, wherein dwells righteouſneſs, Iſai. li. 16.

" For if any man be in Chriſt, there is a new crea-" tion: old things paſs away, and all things become " new," at Chriſt's appearing in his glory in the heart; to which they that truly believe in him, cannot but haſten; that the earth, with the works thereof, may be burnt up, and the heavens alſo; that ſo the new heavens, and the new earth, may be inwardly witneſſed and experienced, and the King of Glory found ſitting on his throne, and reigning therein.

Obſ. 2. How Peter and Paul, with the reſt of the apoſtles and holy men of God, wrote. They wrote according to the wiſdom given unto them. They wrote not in their own wills, or according to their own wiſdom; but kept to the gift and light of the Spirit, which they had received from the Lord. They waited to obſerve the Lord go before, the Spirit of the Lord move, and alſo give ability from the meaſure and gift of life, which he had beſtowed upon them.

And theſe are the proper limits of writing and ſpeaking under the miniſtration of the goſpel; which is a miniſtration of the Spirit and power, and not of the literal knowledge of things, according to man's underſtanding and comprehenſion.

Obſ. 3. That there are ſome things in the writings of Paul (and in the other ſcriptures alſo), hard to be underſtood; which every one that hath true life and true ſenſe, does not at firſt underſtand, but only ſuch as are grown to a capacity. For the writings of the apoſtles, and miniſtrations of the Spirit, are to ſeveral ſtates and capacities, and can only be underſtood according to the growth and capacity of each ſtate; much leſs can the carnal mind underſtand or digeſt that which is high and ſpiritual.

Obſ. 4. That there are ſome among thoſe whom the Lord viſiteth, and reacheth to by his power, who do not attain to the knowledge of the truth, nor come to the

the eſtabliſhment therein: ſome that are always learning, but never come to the true, heavenly, ſpiritual knowledge of the things of God; ſome that know Chriſt only according to the letter, but not according to his Spirit and power. Some there are that learn in ſuch a way, as they can never come truly and thoroughly to underſtand: for it is God that openeth the heart and ear; it is Chriſt who hath, and giveth, the key of knowledge; but many learn what they can of the things of God and Chriſt, without having their hearts and ears opened by the Lord, and without the true key of knowledge; and ſo thoſe remain unlearned and unſtable as to the myſtery of godlineſs, as to the myſtery of life and ſalvation, and as to the nature of the things of God's kingdom.

Obſ. 5. That thoſe who are unlearned and unſtable in the myſtery of truth, are wreſters of the ſcripture. They cannot underſtand things as they are, not having the key; and ſo they wreſt them, and ſtrive to make them ſpeak, as they apprehend and would have them.

And here in this ſtate, in this wiſdom, is both adding to, and diminiſhing from, the holy words of truth: for in many places they add of their own conceivings, and in other places diminiſh from the drift and intent of God's Spirit.

Obſ. 6. That wreſting the ſcriptures tends to the deſtruction of thoſe that do it. God is the Saviour, and the holy words of the Saviour tend to ſave; but being bent aſide by man's nature and ſpirit, they are not the ſame they were when they came from God, nor have at all that virtue and nature in them.

And indeed wreſting the ſcriptures is an high, preſumptuous, and provoking act, and brings God's diſpleaſure againſt, and curſe upon, the ſoul.

Now it is impoſſible for any man not to wreſt the ſcriptures, unleſs he keep cloſe to God's Spirit to receive from him the underſtanding of them; *for the inſpiration of the Almighty giveth underſtanding*, and not another thing. God knoweth what he intendeth, in the words he ſpake concerning the heavenly things;

but man knoweth not, but as his ſpirit is opened and enlightened by the Lord.

Bleſſed is he who waiteth upon and watcheth to God's Spirit in reading the Scriptures, not leaning to his own underſtanding and apprehenſion of things, but waiting to feel his mind opened and quickened by the Lord, that in the renewings of his mind he may learn of God that which is new and living, which is not comprehended in the letter (or in literal deſcriptions of things) but in the Spirit and power itſelf, which is the limits of the new covenant, out of which the children of life are not to depart, but to abide, dwell, and grow up therein.

XXV.

Concerning the Goſpel Miniſtry, or right Way of teaching and learning the Myſtery of Life and Salvation.

WHEN Chriſt came in the *fulneſs of time*, in that body prepared for him by the Father (he who was filled with the Spirit, and anointed of God to preach the goſpel), he preached the kingdom of God, bidding men ſeek it, directing them where to ſeek it, and how they might find it; telling them, in ſeveral parables, what it was like, and where to look for it, even within their own hearts; and that they might the better diſcern it, ſhadowed out the being, nature, and properties of it, in ſeveral reſemblances. He compared *it* to a *treaſure hid in a field, which the wiſe merchant ſelleth all to buy*; to *a pearl hid in the earth*; to *a loſt piece of ſilver, which they that ſweep their own houſes, and ſearch with the true candle, may find*; to *a talent* (for ſuch is the free gift of the pure and heavenly life); to *leaven (hidden leaven)*; to a *ſeed*; to *ſalt*, &c.

So when Chriſt ſent his apoſtles after him, in the ſame Spirit and power wherein he himſelf came and miniſtered, he ſent them to preach the ſame thing, giving them this meſſage to declare to men, "that "God

" God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all; and " that Chriſt is the way, the truth, and the life; and " that the life was manifeſted;" ſo that they heard, and ſaw, and taſted, and handled of it; and ſo were to direct men how to come into fellowſhip with them in this life, and to walk in the *light, as God is in the light.*

Thus Paul likewiſe, who was ſent after the reſt, was ſent to " turn men from darkneſs to light, and from " the power of Satan unto God," Acts xxvi. 18.

Now people being turned to the light (where they may receive underſtanding, and feel virtue, and know the anointing, and hear the voice of the ſhepherd), thoſe who are over them in the Lord, and are made uſe of by him as inſtruments to turn their minds hither, may be ſenſible of their conditions, and may have a word of direction from God to ſpeak to them. And this teaching is not the teaching of man, but the teaching of the holy anointing; and he that heareth this teaching, heareth Chriſt; and he that rejecteth this teaching, rejects Chriſt.

Yet (though the Lord pleaſeth thus to miniſter from the heavenly treaſure in ſome veſſels, which he hath prepared for that end) people are not always to be expecting penſions, or portions of food from others without; but to know and to come to the bread and water of life in their own houſes, that there they may eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, as all do who have true life in them.

Now to give forth precepts of holineſs (as the way in the apoſtaſy hath been) before mens minds are turned to that which enlighteneth, and giveth power to believe and obey; that is not the way of the goſpel; but the way of the goſpel is to bring to the foundation of light and life in the particular, and ſo to diſſettle the ſpirit from that which is dead, and found it upon that which is living; that a living building of pure life, of living ſtones, may be raiſed up unto the Lord; in which temple he dwells and appears, exerciſing his authority and power.

For indeed God dwelleth in the temples of his own building, which are built by and in his Spirit; but in all other temples, which are built out of the Spirit, and only by men (not by God) in a way of imitation from the letter, in which they ſet up the likeneſſes of things, and ſo ſet themſelves to pray and preach, according to their apprehending and forming of things; I ſay, in theſe buildings the Holy Spirit of God dwelleth not; but that ſpirit which hath thus deceived them.

And thus men erring in their hearts concerning the light, concerning the power, concerning the foundation (not knowing how it is indeed laid in Sion) concerning the ſcriptures of truth (which can only be underſtood in the light and inſpiration of the Almighty, from whence they were given forth) they can never come to know Chriſt and his Spirit livingly revealed in power in their own hearts, nor the new and living way, and how to walk therein, nor the *truth as it is in Jeſus*, according to the miniſtration of the New Teſtament (which is not after the letter, but after the Spirit), nor the new covenant, which is made with the ſoul in Chriſt, wherein all things are made new, and the old done away; nor the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus written in the heart, which blots out the other law, even the law of ſin and death, and makes free therefrom; and ſo they cannot witneſs what it is to come from under the law, where ſin reigns, into and under grace, where life reigns and hath the dominion.

Who knows the truth which makes free? Could men then ſay, they ſhall never be made free from the body of ſin on this ſide the grave? *Who hath received grace for grace from Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, and knows the virtue of it? Could men then teſtify againſt it for ſin, as if the grace of Chriſt could never deliver from it, and give dominion over it here in this life? who knows the faith which gives victory, the hope which purifies, the love which unites to God, and conſtrains unto the obedience of the goſpel, and whoſe ſtrength in the heart is ſtronger than the ſtrength of death?

Oh!

Oh! the goſpel-religion, the goſpel-ſpirit, the goſpel-power, the goſpel-love, the goſpel-faith, the goſpel-obedience, the goſpel-knowledge, the goſpel-worſhip, hath been loſt for many ages and generations! And now God hath cauſed it to ſhine forth and appear again, what a flood of reproaches doth the dragon ſend forth againſt it? And how do men ſtrive to uphold their dead knowledge, and their dead buildings, their dead ways, their dead worſhip, &c. which they think highly of, and magnify; blaſpheming that which is living, which came from God, is accompanied with his power, and hath the evidence and demonſtration of his Spirit going along with it!

Well, *all fleſh is graſs, and its beauty ſhall fade.* Let it paint and make a flouriſh as long as it can; yet the breath of the Lord hath blown upon it, and it is already withered, and ſhall wither daily more and more. But the Word of the Lord, which quickeneth and changeth the heart (which his deſpiſed ſervants have been viſited with, and have teſtified, and do teſtify of) ſhall abide for ever, when that ſpirit, wiſdom, and religion, which hath oppoſed, ſhall vaniſh like ſmoke, and ſink under eternal condemnation.

XXVI.

A few Words concerning the old and new Covenant, with ſome Queries thereupon.

THE *old covenant* was that covenant which God made with that people the Jews, when he took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt outward. The *new covenant* is that covenant which God makes with the ſoul, when he takes it by the hand to lead it out of Egypt inward, which is the land of darkneſs and pollution.

The *old covenant* was made with the outward people, with the ſeed of Abraham according to the fleſh. The *new covenant* is made with the inward people, with the

ſeed of Abraham according to the ſpirit, according to the faith, according to the promiſe: for in this covenant, not they that are the children of the fleſh are of Abraham; but the children of the promiſe are accounted for the ſeed.

The *old covenant* was made by Moſes, the ſervant, who was *faithful in all his houſe as a ſervant.* The *new covenant* is made by Chriſt, the Lord and king of his church and people, who is faithful in *quickening them all, reconciling them all, interceding for them all,* according to the tenor and way of this covenant.

The *old covenant* conſiſted in laws and directions outward, which that nation and people had fully and exactly given them from God, above all nations and people of the earth. The *new covenant* conſiſts in life and Spirit inward, which the holy people, the renewed people, the redeemed people, are viſited with, and made partakers of, above all other people.

Under the *old covenant,* though the Lord did great things before the eyes of that people in Egypt, and exerciſed them with ſigns, miracles, and trials alſo in the wilderneſs; yet the Lord did not give them an heart to perceive, and eyes to ſee, and ears to hear: unto that day, as mentioned in Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4. the veil was over their hearts. But the *other covenant* contains the *giving of a new heart,* the *opening of the blind eye,* the *unſtopping of the deaf ear,* the *writing the law in the heart,* the *putting the pure fear in the inward parts,* the *putting God's Spirit within them,* and ſo cauſing them to walk in his ſtatutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them. Whereupon theſe Queries are in my heart:

Query 1. Will not this covenant inwardly reform the heart, ſoul, mind, and conſcience, and amend all in this inward, ſpiritual, renewed people, which was amiſs in that outward earthly unrenewed people?

Query 2. Doth not the ſoul begin to enter into this covenant ſo ſoon as ever it anſwers the Lord in the viſits of his love, turning from ſin unto him?

Query

Query 3. How precious is that grace of the goſpel which brings into this covenant? For the people of the Jews came into the old covenant by the law which was given by Moſes; but the children of the new covenant come thereinto by receiving the *grace and truth which comes by Jeſus Chriſt.*

Query 4. Can any poſſibly enter into the covenant without coming to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and receiving grace from him? Can obſerving precepts, and directions from ſcripture, bring into this covenant? Or is it the receiving grace, truth, life in the inward parts, from Chriſt the Lord, which brings into this covenant? Oh! wait to know the miniſtration of the goſpel, and covenant of life, with the entrance thereinto, O all that truly deſire the ſalvation of your ſouls!

Query 5. Wherein doth the miniſtry of this covenant conſiſt; or how is the teaching thereof? Is it by getting a form of knowledge out of the letter, or miniſtering the letter? Is it not a miniſtration not of the letter, but of the Spirit? The apoſtle ſaid ſo, who knew what it was, and was made an able miniſter thereof by God, 2 Cor. iii. 6. Truly none can miniſter goſpelly, none can miniſter under the new covenant, but thoſe that miniſter from and in the Spirit.

XXVII.

Queries on ROM. vith, viith, *and* viiith Chapters.

From CHAP. vi.

Query 1. WHAT is it to be baptized into Chriſt? Is it not to be baptized into his death? Are not they that are truly baptized into Chriſt buried with him by baptiſm into death? That "like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the "glory of the Father, even ſo they alſo ſhould walk "in the newneſs of life." How can they that are dead to ſin live any longer therein?

Query

Query 2. What was the end of Chriſt's manifeſtation in the fleſh, and ſending his Spirit? Was it not to deſtroy the works of the devil; to crucify the old man, that the *body of ſin* might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin?

Query 3. Is he that is crucified with Chriſt, and dead unto ſin, freed from ſin? Doth the truth of Chriſt, the life of Chriſt, the Spirit of Chriſt, the power of Chriſt, make thoſe that receive and obey it free indeed; ſo that ſin cannot have dominion over them, to make them do what they hate, or to hinder them from doing what God requires? Did not Chriſt himſelf die to ſin once, but now lives to God? And are not believers after this manner to reckon themſelves dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord?

Query 4. Have believers received power from Chriſt ("who had all power in heaven and earth given unto "him") to become ſons? Have they received the Spirit of the Father, which hath dominion over ſin? Can they ſtop or hinder the reign of it in their mortal body, and refuſe obeying the luſts thereof, and not yield their members inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin?

Query 5. Are believers alive from the dead? And can they yield their members ſervants to righteouſneſs, for God to work in and by them, according to his will and pleaſure? Can they ever come to ſuch a ſtate, as to do nothing againſt the truth, but for the truth? "to do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens "them?"

Query 6. Is this true, that to whom people yield themſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants they are to whom they obey, whether of "ſin unto death," or of "obedience unto righteouſneſs?"

Query 7. Do men, or is it poſſible for men, in receiving, joining to, and obeying the truth, to be made free from ſin, and become the ſervants of righteouſneſs?

Query 8. Cannot men have their fruit unto holineſs, and at the end everlaſting life, without being made free from

from ſin, and becoming ſervants to God? Is the *wages of ſin death* after a man has believed? After a man is turned from ſin to Chriſt, if he hearken afterwards to Satan, and commit ſin, doth he reap death thereby? See alſo Gal. vi. 7, 8.

From CHAP. vii.

Query 1. What law is that which hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth; and what life is that in man which the law hath dominion over?

Query 2. How doth a man become dead to the law, that he might be married to another, even to "him "who is raiſed from the dead, that he ſhould bring "forth fruit unto God?" Can any be married to the raiſed living huſband, but the quickened, raiſed, and living ſoul? And can any elſe bring forth fruit to God?

Query 3. What is the ſtate of being in the fleſh, and of knowing the things of God after the fleſh? of receiving directions and practiſing duties in that ſtate? Do not the motions of ſin (which all outward laws and directions do but ſtir up, but cannot overcome) work in the members there, in that ſtate, to bring forth fruit unto death?

Query 4. How comes a man to be delivered from the law? Is it not by the death of that in him which held him captive unto ſin? And why doth God quicken with a new life, and kill in the hearts of his that wherein they were held? Is it not that they ſhould ſerve him in newneſs of Spirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter? For the letter killeth, and the literal ſervice and worſhip is dead, and that worſhip alone is living and goſpel-worſhip, which is in the newneſs of the Spirit; for ſuch alone the Father ſeeketh to worſhip him, and ſuch worſhip alone he accepteth.

Query 5. Is the law ſin becauſe it ſtirs up ſin? Nay; the law itſelf is not ſin, but that which diſcovers and makes it known: for no man can know ſin, but by the law or light which diſcovers it.

Query

Query 6. How is ſin dead without the law? And how doth it take occaſion by the commandment to work in the heart all manner of concupiſcence?

Query 7. How was Paul alive without the law once? Could he ſacrifice, could he read the ſcriptures, could he be knowing, could he be zealous, could he walk according to the law in the letter blameleſs in that ſtate? See Phil. iii. 4, 5, 6.

Query 8. What commandment was that, upon the coming whereof ſin revived, and he died? Was it the law in the letter, or the law in the Spirit? He ſaith, "the commandment which was to life, he found to "be unto death." What is the commandment which is to life? Is it not the "word nigh in the mouth and "heart?" See Deut. xxxix.

Query 9. How came ſin to take occaſion by the commandment (which comes forth holily, and as juſt and good from God) to deceive and ſlay him? What was it which it deceived and ſlew? Was it not that part which thought it could obey and ſerve God, if his will was made manifeſt; which now, when the law indeed came, found it could not? Nor can any man obey the holy law of life, till this nature, wiſdom and ſpirit, be in ſome meaſure ſlain in him.

Query 10. Doth then the holy law of God, which God ordains and ſends unto life, miniſter death to the ſoul? Or doth ſin (being provoked and ſtirred up to put forth its ſtrength to ſave its life, and retain its dominion in the heart) take occaſion by the commandment to work death, and ſhew the exceeding evil and ſinfulneſs of its nature?

Query 11. Is not the law ſpiritual? Can ſin gain any ſtrength or advantage by that which is ſpiritual? Surely, nay; but it taketh occaſion then to tyrannize over and captivate me, (who am carnal and ſold under it) till the power of the Lord make a change in my ſtate, working me from under the dominion of it.

Query 12. How is it with the ſoul in the ſtate of captivity, when ſin is revived by the law, the ſoul dead as to its former life and ſtrength, and not yet come

come under the dominion and power of grace? Doth it not do what it allows not, and not do the good it would? Yea, doth not the enemy oftentimes even force it to do what it hates, the ſoul being as yet weak in the faith, whereby alone ſtrength is received to reſiſt him? Is not this ſtate experienced in ſome meaſure by every traveller? Doth not every one feel the ſtrength of ſin, and his own inability either to *will or to do of himſelf that which is good, &c.* before he witneſs help and deliverance from the Lord?

Query 13. Doth God impute to the ſoul, or to ſin, the effect of this captivity, and work of ſin and Satan upon the heart, againſt the bent and earneſt deſires and endeavours of the ſoul?

Query 14. When is the ſoul in this ſtate of trouble and captivity? Is it not after ſome appearance and operation of God's power in the heart? Is it not after the mind is turned from ſin, and deſireth to be joined to the holy law of life and obey it? Is it not after God hath wrought the will in the mind to do good; ſo that the conſent is given to the law, and the will is preſent; but how to perform that which is good it findeth not, becauſe faith is yet ſo weak, and ſin and unbelief ſo ſtrong in the heart?

Query 15. Is not this the time of bitter warfare, and day of terrible diſtreſs in the heart, and of feeling the wickedneſs of the eſtate, becauſe of ſin; and of crying out, and longing after the ſalvation and deliverance of the goſpel? Oh! *woe is me, who ſhall deliver me, poor captive,* ſaith the ſoul, *in this ſtate!*

Query 16. Is not God very tender to the ſoul in this ſtate, daily blotting out, and not imputing ſin? Oh! if it were not for the exceeding mercy and tender love, and help of the Lord in this ſtate, it were impoſſible for any ever to come through it! But thanks be to God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, who both upholds in it, and carries through it, ſo that a change comes to be witneſſed, and a better ſtate known by thoſe who conſent not to ſin; but continue in taking part

part with the good, holy, and ſpiritual law of life againſt it.

From CHAP. viii.

Query 1. What is that ſtate wherein there is no condemnation? Is not that the ſtate of the redeemed ſouls in Chriſt? Doth not condemnation follow, where there is ſin and diſobedience? See Heb. ii. 1, &c. Doth not God condemn ſin, and the ſoul becauſe of ſin, till it be driven from ſin by the law unto Chriſt, and learn of him to walk as he walked, even "not after "the fleſh, but after the Spirit?" For to the Spirit, to the ſeed, to the heavenly man, there is no condemnation; nor to them that walk after the Spirit.

Query 2. How come any to walk after the Spirit? Can any walk after the Spirit, but as they are made free, by the power of Chriſt revealed in their hearts againſt the power of Satan, from the law of ſin and death? Will not ſin and death captivate a man, and entangle him in luſts, evil motions and works, till their ſtrength be broken in him, and his ſoul delivered and ſet free therefrom?

Query 3. How doth the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus make free from the law of ſin and death? Is it not thus? Did not God condemn ſin in Chriſt's fleſh? and doth not the ſame Spirit and law of life condemn it in ours alſo, and bring the judgment and juſtice of the holy law of life over it? And ſo bringing the ſoul off from that which is unholy, unto the holy and righteous Spirit and nature of Chriſt; and bringing it to walk out of the deadneſs of ſin, in the newneſs of life; it is removed from thence where the condemnation is, thither where the condemnation cannot come: for in Chriſt, in the new nature, in the heavenly image, in the newneſs of the Spirit, there never was, nor ever can be, any condemnation.

Query 4. Would God have the righteouſneſs of the law fulfilled in his children? Would he have them walk exactly with him in the new covenant, which both

both comprehends and exceeds the righteouſneſs of the old covenant? Conſider whether Chriſt fulfilling the old covenant be their righteouſneſs, or his fulfilling the new in them and for them: for he both doth take away their unrighteouſneſs, and alſo brings in the righteouſneſs into them, which is of his own pure, heavenly and everlaſting nature. Is not he the image of God? Is not he righteouſneſs? And when he is in them, and they changed into his nature and Spirit, is not he their righteouſneſs? Oh! wait to determine this thing, all that deſire to know and partake of the righteouſneſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the true and pure ſenſe of life, and in the evidence and demonſtration of God's Holy Sprit.

Query 5. Do not all men act according to the principle, whether of fleſh or ſpirit, to which their minds are joined? Do not they which are of the fleſh mind, ſavour, approve, deſire after, and delight in that which is fleſhly? But they that are after the Spirit, do not they mind, ſavour, deſire after, approve, and delight in the things of the Spirit? Therefore is not this of great concern to all to conſider, not ſo much what their profeſſion and appearance is outwardly, as what their root is inwardly, and what nature, ſpirit and growth, they and their religion are of?

Query 6. What doth it produce to have the mind exerciſed by the fleſh? Doth it not produce death? Is not the nature, ſpirit, and wiſdom of the fleſh ſeparated from God's nature, who is life? and can it bring forth any thing in the heart but corruption and death? But the minding of the other principle, and being exerciſed by the other principle, that produceth life and peace; doth it not? Let all that have inwardly experienced theſe things, aſſent and teſtify in ſpirit before the Lord to his praiſe.

Query 7. Is not the fleſh enmity againſt God? Can any thing which is enmity againſt God, who is the quickening life, do any thing but deaden and kill where it finds entrance? Life and peace is witneſſed in ſubjection to God, who gives it to them that obey the law

law of his Spirit. Is that which is in the enmity, and ſtands in the enmity, ſubject (or can it be ſubject) to the holy law of God? Nay; there muſt be a new creation felt in the heart, before there can be a ſubjection to that which is pure and living.

Query 8. Can any men that are in the fleſh, that are not truly and inwardly changed by the Spirit and power of the goſpel; I ſay, can they pleaſe God in any thing they do? Can they believe, or pray, or read the ſcriptures, or practiſe any thing they obſerve from the ſcriptures, ſo as to pleaſe God thereby? Nay ſurely, without changing the principle, without having the heart changed by God's power, there is no right believing, praying, or doing any thing to pleaſe God. This makes moſt mens religion and performances unſavoury, becauſe they know not, nor are turned to, and guided by, that principle and ſeed of life, which ſeaſons and makes ſavoury.

Query 9. How may a man know whether he be in the fleſh, or in the Spirit? If he be in the Spirit, doth not the Spirit dwell in him? For the Spirit createth anew, and the Spirit dwelleth in that which he newcreateth. It is the ſtrong man armed who keeps and dwells in the old houſe; but the Spirit of Chriſt keeps and dwells in the new houſe: and if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt (notwithſtanding all his religion, knowledge, faith, prayers, &c.) he is none of his.

Query 10. If Chriſt, the quickening Spirit, (the living power) be in a man, doth he not kill ſin there? Is not the body dead there becauſe of ſin? Can ſin live there, where Chriſt dwells? and is not his Spirit life there, to quicken in and unto righteouſneſs? Yea, is it poſſible that Chriſt ſhould dwell in any man's heart by his Spirit, and his Spirit not be quickening the mortal body in which he dwells? Oh! how precious is it to feel the quickening life and power! This is a daily ſeal of the true religion; and the daily operation of God's Spirit in the hearts of his children, ſhews who dwells there.

Query

Query 11. To which are we debtors, who are redeemed to God by his Spirit and power? Are we debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh, which brings into bondage to sin and death? Or are we debtors to that Spirit and power of life, which hath made us alive to God, and preserveth us in life, and quickeneth us unto life, day by day?

Query 12. Is it possible that any one should come to life, but by the mortifying, denying, and destroying of that which nourisheth sin, and leads into death? and what can do that but the power of God's Spirit?

Query 13. Are not all the sons of God led by his Spirit? Oh! how necessary then is it for every man to be sure, both that he hath received God's Spirit, and that he be led by it?

Query 14. What is the Spirit of bondage, which begetteth fear when God awakeneth the soul? and what is the Spirit of adoption, whereby the soul can cry *Abba, Father?* Can any cry *Abba, Father*, but those that are begotten of God's Spirit? Many men put up requests, and are able to make long prayers, (perhaps such as may be taking to the eye of man's wisdom) and yet know not that Spirit which begetteth life in the heart, and teacheth to cry *Abba, Father.*

Query 15. Is it not a precious thing for people truly to feel the Spirit of God bearing witness with their spirits, that they are God's children; heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ; and so leading them through the sufferings, that they may come to partake with him of his glory? But do any come to partake of his glory, who do not first come through the sufferings?

XXVIII.

A further Teſtimony in brief concerning the Work of GOD upon our Hearts, who are called QUAKERS.

IT hath been with us, and ſo we have felt it from the Lord, juſt as is expreſſed, Tit. ii. 5. Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.

We are a people who have been greatly diſtreſſed (many of us) for want of that life and power which was revealed in the apoſtles days. We are a race of travellers, who have been travelling out of the nature, wiſdom, ſpirit, and courſe of this world, (which is vain and paſſeth away) towards our reſting-place. We have wandered from mountain to hill, from one way of religion to another, ſeeking after him whom our ſouls dearly loved. Indeed the watchmen have often laughed at us and mocked us, wiſhing us to return to them; but that would not ſtill the cry of our ſouls, which were ſick with earneſt deſire, not after formal ways of religion, but after life and immortality, that it might be again brought to light, (as it had been in the apoſtles days) and our ſouls made partakers thereof. Now, after many a weary ſtep and deep ſickneſs of heart, when we were come even near to deſpair of ever finding or enjoying what our ſouls ſo ſorely longed after, it pleaſed the Lord at length in his tender mercy to appear among us, and by the directions of his Holy Spirit to turn our minds inward; ſhewing us, that *that* which we ſought without, was to be found within: telling us, that there was the kingdom, which was not to be found by obſervations without, but by meeting with, and ſubjecting to, the light and power of life within. And when we were ſolicitous how to know it from the darkneſs and deceit within, this anſwer was given us from the Lord; its nature will diſcover itſelf; it will turn againſt all darkneſs and deceit

ceit in the heart; it will find out and reprove whatever is reproveable, and furniſh the ſoul with ſtrength againſt it. Oh! bleſſed ſound from the Lord God of life, who thus drew our hearts to wait upon him; and ſhewed us how to wait, and what to wait for, and where we might meet with that which our hearts ſo exceedingly deſired and panted after! And truly as our minds were thus turned inwards, the holy light did ſhine upon us from the Sun of righteouſneſs, and the pure life and nature from the Son of God did ſpring up in us; and we felt the power of God revealed in our hearts, and the old image of ſin and unrighteouſneſs daily defacing, and our ſouls creating anew (in Chriſt Jeſus) into the holy and heavenly image. So that here we felt the mercy of God, which ſaved his people in all ages, reaching to us alſo; and his Spirit regenerating, renewing, and waſhing us, with the water and blood which cleanſeth: and as we were regenerated and renewed more and more, ſo we were ſtill waſhed more and more, and came more into fellowſhip with Chriſt in his death; and were alſo raiſed up by him more and more into his life, and taught to ſet our affections more on things above, and leſs on things below; which are of an enſnaring and entangling nature, in which the minds of the ſons of men are held captive, until they meet with that royal, excellent, noble Spirit and power, which breaks the chains and fetters of darkneſs, and redeems out of them. And now we can teſtify (in true ſenſe, and in the evidence and demonſtration of God's Spirit) that not by working, willing, or running of ourſelves; not by any works of righteouſneſs, which we had done or could do: but by the tender mercy of God viſiting, and by the operation of his Holy Spirit upon us, (in and through regenerating, renewing, and waſhing us from that which defiled and ſtained our ſouls, and made them guilty in his ſight, and liable to his wrath) were we ſaved from the wrath to come, and from the ways of tranſgreſſion wherein we walked, before our God thus viſited us.

Now it is the ſincere deſire of our ſouls, that this tender mercy of God might take effect on others alſo; and that they might likewiſe be lighted by him to the place where wiſdom teacheth her children, and where the true redemption of the ſoul is witneſſed, and the true knowledge of the Father and of Chriſt, (which is life eternal) given and received; that people might not be hardened to deſtruction, and deceived of their ſouls, by a fooliſh and vain religion, wherein is not the ſubſtance and kernel, (which alone can nouriſh up to life eternal) but only ſome ſhew and appearance thereof, which cannot really ſatisfy that which is indeed begotten and born of God's Spirit.

XXIX.

A brief Account of the Ground of our Worſhip, and how it cometh to paſs that we cannot conform to the Spirit of this World, or to the Wills of Men therein, but only to the Spirit and Will of our God.

WE fear God, who made heaven and earth, whoſe power is over all, who hath cauſed the light of his Holy Spirit to ſhine in our hearts, thereby teaching us how to worſhip him acceptably in Spirit and truth; which worſhip he hath required of us, that we meet together ſo to do in thoſe aſſemblies, which he hath gathered by his power, and ordereth by his Spirit, either in ſilence or ſound of words, according to his pleaſure.

And God, who hath appointed us thus to worſhip him, hath power over our bodies and ſouls, and can deſtroy and caſt both into hell, if we ſhould deny the truth and way of worſhip which he hath taught us. Yea, if we ſhould deny this way of worſhip, we ſhould deny Chriſt, and be denied by him before his Father in heaven. For he himſelf hath ſaid, that neither at the mountain of Samaria, nor at Jeruſalem, ſhould men worſhip; but they that worſhip the Father, muſt worſhip

worſhip him in Spirit and in truth. Now men cannot worſhip in Spirit and in truth as they pleaſe, or in the ways of their own inventing and ſetting up; but he that worſhippeth in Spirit and truth muſt firſt be made ſpiritual; and then muſt wait in ſilence of the fleſh for God's Spirit to quicken him unto ſpiritual worſhip. For they that worſhip otherwiſe than thus, worſhip at beſt but after the oldneſs of the letter, and not in the newneſs of the Spirit, which is the only worſhip God ſeeketh, and requireth, under the New Teſtament.

Beſides, we have found God's preſence with us, and bleſſing upon us, in this way of worſhip; and our hearts greatly melted and warmed therein, and power given us over our paſſions and corruptions inwardly, and to order our lives and converſations holily, righteouſly, and innocently outwardly: which preſence of God, and holy power over ſin and vanity, affections and luſts, we would not loſe for ten thouſand worlds. And what an unjuſt and unthankful thing were it in us to turn from this way of worſhip which God hath called us to, where we have met with theſe things, to that way of worſhip where we did not meet with theſe things, and where others do not, nor can, meet with them? For theſe things are only to be met with in that way of worſhip which God hath appointed and bleſſed, and not in that way of worſhip which man hath invented and ſet up, which every profane and wicked perſon can cry up and enjoy his luſts under; but they that are otherwiſe taught of God can by no means ſubmit to, without grievouſly ſinning againſt him.

Now magiſtracy was never ordained of God, nor power given to men by him, to force people to ſin againſt him.

And is it not a great ſin to worſhip againſt one's faith, according to the wills and precepts of men, contrary to the teachings and requirings of his Holy Spirit? Are not they that do thus hypocrites? Was power given unto magiſtrates to make them hypo-

crites; or to encourage people unto truth and uprightneſs both towards God and men? To wait upon God in his fear, to be taught by him the true way of worſhip, is not this good and right in his ſight? And to worſhip in Spirit and truth as he teacheth, is not this to do well? And was not the magiſtrate ordained of God to be a terror to evil-doers, and a praiſe to them that do well? The magiſtrate ſaith we do not obey him; but he ſhould rather inquire whether he doth not require that of us wherein we cannot obey him, without ſinning againſt the Lord, and againſt the light of his Holy Spirit in our own hearts and conſciences, and ſo bring God's wrath upon us, and provoke him to deſtroy us both body and ſoul? But if men will needs be angry with us for ſerving the Lord, and worſhipping him according to his holy law and will, we had better undergo their anger and unjuſt puniſhments for obeying our God, than come under his wrath for diſobedience. And God is our witneſs that no ſtubbornneſs, wilfulneſs, or contempt of authority, engageth us in the leaſt to continue through many ſufferings in this way of meeting together to worſhip our God; but only obedience to the goſpel and power of Chriſt, which we have found in this viſitation and miniſtration of life from on high to be to us, by its redeeming us out of ſin, and from the ſpirit of this world. And the ſame that hath redeemed us in ſome meaſure, hath required us thus to wait on the Lord to have our redemption perfected; and in thus waiting upon him, it is daily added to, and carried on; bleſſed be the name of our God. But if we ſhould forbear thus to meet, we ſhould turn from, ſin againſt, and provoke our God, (who hath already redeemed us in part, and is ſtill further and further redeeming us) and turn back to Egypt, Sodom, and Babylon, where is the darkneſs, luſt, and confuſion, and not the holy order of God's Spirit, neither in the converſations nor in the worſhips of thoſe that dwell and abide there.

Some

XXX.

Some Queries concerning knowing and owning the Lord Jesus Christ truly and aright, who hath been the only Saviour and Redeemer in all Ages and Generations; and there never was, and never shall be, any other.

Query 1. WHETHER they know or own the Lord Jesus Christ truly and aright, who only know and own him as outwardly described and related of in the scriptures, but know him not inwardly revealed in their hearts, as the Word and power of eternal life? Or whether they are the true knowers and owners of Christ, who know and own him not only according to a literal description of him in the scriptures, but also as inwardly revealed by the Father, witnessing him formed in them, and their hearts changed into his holy and heavenly image, by virtue of his inward appearance and operation of his Spirit and power in them?

Query 2. Whether they truly and rightly know the death and resurrection of Christ, who know only the relation of them in the scriptures, but are not made conformable to his death, nor raised by him in the power of his life? Or whether they are the true and right knowers of his death and resurrection, who are buried with him by the holy baptism of his Spirit into death, who through the Spirit have mortified the deeds of the body, and witness the holy seed of life raised and living in them, and themselves raised and made alive to God, in and through the power of the Father revealed in them?

Query 3. Whether they truly and rightly confess Christ to be the Lord and King, Priest and Prophet of his people, who confess it only from the reading of it to be so in the scriptures? Or whether they are not the true and right confessors of Christ's kingly, priestly, and prophetical offices, who witness him exercising them in them; who witness him overcoming and reign-

ing over ſin and death in them; over whom other lords, even the ſpirits and powers of darkneſs, have not dominion now, but Chriſt only; and in whom he miniſtereth as in his temple, offering ſpiritual gifts and ſacrifices to his Father, and who alſo propheſieth there, opening and revealing the myſteries of his kingdom to them, as he doth to the leaſt babes that are truly begotten and born of his Spirit?

Query 4. Do they or can they truly know Chriſt's voice, who never experienced the Word of life ſpeaking in their hearts? Where doth the falſe prophet ſpeak? Doth he not ſpeak within? And where doth the true Shepherd ſpeak? Doth he not ſpeak within alſo, even in the heart? And do not the ſheep hear, know, and diſtinguiſh his voice there?

Query 5. Who knoweth the truth as it is in Jeſus? Do any do ſo but thoſe that have felt the drawings of the Father; come unto the Son in the drawings; and received life from and abide in him? Do any know the truth in Jeſus but thoſe that witneſs virtue, freedom, life, and power, by the truth in ſome meaſure? Doth not that ſaying and promiſe of Chriſt (John viii. 31, 32.) ſtand firm in every age? "If ye continue in "my words, then are ye my diſciples indeed. And "ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make "you free."

Query 6. Who are ingrafted into Chriſt? Can any one be ingrafted into him, but as he is inwardly revealed and made known? Yea, is not he in them who are ingrafted into him, and are not they in him? Is not he that is truly regenerated cut off from the old ſtock within, from the root of bitterneſs within; and is not he implanted into the new ſtock within alſo; inſomuch as he ſenſibly feeleth the pure holy root of life bear him, and the ſap thereof ſpringing up in him, cauſing him to bring forth fruit to God in due ſeaſon?

Query 7. Who prayeth in the name of Chriſt? Doth he who ſaith theſe or ſuch-like words in the beſt ſerioufneſs and ſenſibleneſs he can in his own will, "Hear me, O Lord, for Chriſt's ſake: I confeſs I "am

" am unworthy; but I beg of thee in his name who " is worthy," &c. or he who prayeth in the child's nature, on the Father's breathing upon him, in the Spirit of the Father which is given him, and in the time and will of the Father? He that doth but ſigh or groan in and from the Spirit, doth not that ſigh or groan aſcend up to the Father in Chriſt's name? Alas! how outward is mens religion! But the inward ſtreams and current of the true, pure, and heavenly religion they know not.

Query 8. Who receiveth Chriſt? Do any but thoſe who receive and bow to the light of his Spirit inwardly revealed? Can any receive him but they that hear his knocks and open to him? Do any know the inward voice of the Shepherd, beſides the ſheep? And can any receive his voice, and not receive him? And can any who are ignorant of, and refuſe his voice, receive him?

Query 9. Who do truly and rightly believe in Chriſt? Do any do ſo, or can any do ſo, but they who firſt feel life, from whence the true faith ſprings? Ah! that all the faith in men were daſhed, but what comes from life, unites to life, and abides in life!

Query 10. Whom doth Chriſt gather from the barren mountains? Are they not his ſheep; his poor, diſtreſſed, ſcattered, wounded, fainting, and almoſt famiſhed ſheep? What are the mountains he gathers them from? Are they not the ſeveral dead ways, worſhips, and gatherings without life? And out of whoſe mouths doth he reſcue them? Is it not out of the mouths of the ſhepherds that made a prey of them; who fed them not with life, with virtue, with pure living knowledge; but with words, with dreams, with apprehenſions of their own, concerning the things of God? And whither doth he lead them? Is it not to his own holy mountain, (which is exalted by God, and eſtabliſhed over and on top of all thoſe other mountains) where the freſh paſtures are, and where the ſtreams of life flow, and run plentifully?

Query

Query 11. Who are Chriſt's kindred according to the Spirit? Who is his mother, ſiſter, brother? Are any ſo but they that do the will of the Father? And is this obedience a working according to the law, or of the righteouſneſs of the law? Nay; is it not rather of the nature and righteouſneſs of the goſpel? Is not that which floweth from him who is righteous, righteous alſo; even as he is righteous?

Query 12. To whom doth Chriſt give power to become ſons? Is it not to as many as truly and rightly receive him; and believe in his name? "To as many "as received him of old, to them he gave power to "become the ſons of God." Doth he not do ſo ſtill? What is it to receive power to become a ſon? Let the heart that hath received it anſwer; for the notioniſt cannot.

Query 13. What is the reaſon, ſo many who are high in notion and profeſſion, cannot own this precious appearance of the Spirit, power, and glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in this our day, in the hearts of his children, after the long night of darkneſs, which hath ſo long covered the earth? Is not this the very reaſon, even becauſe they do not rightly and truly know either the Father or the Son? Can any ſee or know him that begets, and with the ſame eye not ſee or know him that is begotten of him? Can any love Chriſt, and not love his brethren? Is not wiſdom, in her appearances, juſtified of her children in this age, as well as formerly?

Query 14. Are there two Chriſts, one manifeſted without, and another revealed within; or is it the ſame Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who in the days of his fleſh appeared outwardly, that was afterwards manifeſted within as the myſtery of life, and hope of glory; who alſo in this our day is revealed and made known within unto his, by the ſame eternal Spirit?

Query 15. He that truly and rightly knoweth the Spirit of Chriſt, doth he not know Chriſt alſo? Even as he that knoweth Chriſt muſt needs know the Father alſo. Are not the Father and Chriſt one? Could any one

one ſee Chriſt, even in the days of his fleſh, and not ſee the Father alſo? (ſee John xiv. 9.) So is not Chriſt and the Spirit one in like manner? And are not all that are truly in Chriſt, begotten by, gathered into, and do they not live and walk in, that one Spirit of his? And do they not there know the things of God as they are, and teſtify of what they have ſeen and known? Though they that are out of that Spirit and power know neither him, nor the teſtimony of life that comes by him, no more than the Jews knew his appearance outwardly in their day.

A Query added concerning Imputation.

Query. IN what ſtate was Abraham when faith was imputed to him for righteouſneſs? Was he in the ungodly ſtate; in the ſtate of unbelief and diſobedience to the Spirit and power of the Lord; or was he in the ſenſe of God's power, in the belief of him who could raiſe up his ſon from the dead, and in the performance of obedience unto him, giving up his ſon at the Lord's command?

And in what ſtate muſt we be, when we witneſs faith imputed to us alſo for righteouſneſs? Muſt we not be in the ſenſe of the ſame power, and in the belief of it, and in the obedience of faith? Read Rom. iv. and conſider: for the righteouſneſs of the goſpel is not imputed in or by the works of the law, but in the obedience of faith.

It is true, God juſtifieth the ungodly; through faith he makes them juſt and godly; but doth he juſtify or accept them in the ungodly ſtate? Doth he not firſt make a change in them by his power? Doth he not firſt in ſome meaſure purify their hearts by faith?

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CONCLUSION.

THERE are a great many who profeſs the goſpel ſtate, and that they are in Chriſt, and under grace, and freely juſtified by grace; ſo that they look upon their ſins as covered by the Lord, and not imputed to them, they believing (as they pretend) in the name of his Son, and obeying his goſpel, &c. I ſay, many profeſs theſe things, who do not at all know what they mean truly and rightly, as in God's ſight.

For it is a great matter to be in Chriſt, even to *know him that is true, and to be in him that is true*; to come out of darkneſs into his light, out of death into his life; out of Satan's kingdom, and out of ſubjection to ſin, into his kingdom, and into ſubjection to his Spirit. "If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature; old things are paſſed away, and all things become new." Is this true? Doth he that is in Chriſt witneſs this? And he that doth not witneſs this, is he in Chriſt?

Ah! how many then are deceived about their being in him, and of their hope in him! For how few of thoſe who talk of being in Chriſt know what the new creation in him means, or what it is to have Chriſt formed in them! How few know his Spirit by receiving it, by union with it! which yet if a man have not, he is none of his? How few know how to try ſpirits by the holy anointing, which is only able to try, and diſcover ſuch falſe ſpirits as come in the ſheeps clothing, and as miniſters of righteouſneſs, and yet come with the deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, to draw men from the Spirit and power, or to keep them in a dead form of knowledge and worſhip without true life?

So

So for being under grace, few truly know what it is; for grace is that which hath dominion over ſin, and which giveth dominion to thoſe that are under it. "Sin ſhall not have dominion over you," ſaid the apoſtle; "for ye are not under the law, but under "grace." Therefore yield not your members ſervants or inſtruments to ſin. Ye did ſo when ye were free from righteouſneſs; but now let not ſin reign in your mortal bodies, ſeeing grace gives you power over it, and makes you free from it unto righteouſneſs.

So juſtification by grace is only to them who are taught by grace. The grace of God brings ſalvation, redemption, juſtification to them, and no others; for their ſins only are blotted out, covered, and not imputed, who receive grace, hear the voice of it, and obey it. "Hear, and your ſouls ſhall live." In hearing the grace which teacheth from God, ſouls come to live in his ſight; and the living are juſtified by him; and in the living way and path of life are the ſins blotted out, and the garment given which covers the nakedneſs; which garment is to be girt about the ſoul, and kept cloſe on, or the nakedneſs and ſhame will appear, and be ſeen again.

So to believe in the name of Chriſt, and to fly to his name, and truſt in his name, and to pray to the Father in his name, and to obey in his name and power; theſe are great matters, and very few of thoſe that make profeſſion of them truly know them: for his name is living, (he was dead, but is alive) and his preſence, heavenly virtue, and power is in it. They that know his name, know that which is above every name. They know that which hath an authority from God to bring all things under, (both in the heart, and alſo in the life and converſation) that God alone may be exalted.

The goſpel ſtate is a great ſtate, an high ſtate, a ſtate not of ſhadowy things, but of the everlaſting kingdom, where the ſubſtance of the things under the law is given to, and poſſeſſed by, thoſe that are there, as they grow up in the goſpel power and covenant.

There

There the goſpel faſt is known, the faſt which God hath choſen, which is to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, (which bind down the good, even that which is of God in the heart) to take off the heavy burdens, under which, and by which, that which is pure is bowed down, and to let the oppreſſed ſeed go free. This is the faſt which God hath choſen under the goſpel; the pure and undefiled faſt, even to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's ſelf unſpotted from the world. And to thoſe that obſerve this faſt God maketh a feaſt of fat things; for their light breaketh forth as the morning, and their health groweth up ſpeedily; and their righteouſneſs goeth before them, and the glory of the Lord gathereth them up, or is their rereward; and the Lord is nigh unto them, and is ready to anſwer them in all that they call upon him for, as was promiſed, Iſai. lviii. 8, 9. Now being come to this feaſt, they are to keep it with unleavened bread, as to the fleſh, and as to man's wiſdom; but with the bread which is leavened with the Spirit, leavened with life; and with the wine of the kingdom; which Chriſt eats and drinks with his redeemed ones, new in the goſpel ſpirit and power, which is his Father's kingdom: for the kingdom of God ſtandeth not in meats or drinks, or any other outward thing, no not in good words concerning the things of the kingdom; but in Spirit, power, and life itſelf, and in the righteouſneſs, peace, and joy, which is in the Spirit.

The

The following appears to have been wrote in anſwer to the QUERIES and ANIMADVERSIONS of an Author not named therein. It is ſuppoſed our Friend ISAAC PENINGTON might have mentioned him in the Title, or pointed him out by ſome ſhort introductory Addreſs, which, through Accident, was omitted by the Printer.

Concerning the RULE of the NEW COVENANT, or that which GOD hath appointed to be the Rule to the Children of the New Covenant.

THE way, the truth, the life; the everlaſting way, the everlaſting truth, the everlaſting life; that is the rule in the new covenant. God ſent Chriſt his Son, the Word of eternal life, a light into the world; and the meſſage and drift of the goſpel, is to turn men from the inward darkneſs to the inward light; and being turned to it, the manifeſtation of this light is to be the rule, which manifeſts the way of light and truth as immediately in the heart, as ever the darkneſs did the way of deceit and error.

The promiſe of the new covenant is, "I will put "my Spirit within them;" and this Spirit hath an inward law and teſtimony, which it writeth in the heart; which inward law and teſtimony is to be the rule of the heart. And as the outward Jews were to have recourſe to the outward law and teſtimony, ſo the inward Jews are to have recourſe to the inward law and teſtimony; and to witneſs the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus revealed in them, and their minds and ſpirits ſubjected thereto: and this is near, bright,

bright, and powerful in thoſe who receive the Spirit, and with him the law and power of the endleſs life.

The letter killeth: the Jews underſtood not the way of life by the letter; therefore the promiſe was, "I "will pour out my Spirit upon all fleſh:" and becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son; and thou ſhalt hear a voice behind thee, ſaying, "This is the way, walk in it." And this voice is to be hearkened to; this prophet (which God raiſeth up to the ſoul in the new covenant) is to be heard in all things: and he that hears his voice, and obeys, lives; and he that hears not is in death, even until now, profeſs what he will.

In Chriſt Jeſus, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but the new creation; if any man walk according to this rule, peace be upon him, &c. What doth the apoſtle call the rule here? Oh! wait on the Lord to read in the Spirit, and rightly to underſtand.

If a man receive the Spirit, and walk in the newneſs of the light, and quickenings thereof every day, hath he not a rule which is certain and infallible? If any man be in Chriſt, there is a new creation; and the limits of that new creation (which is the light and power of the endleſs life, or of God's Holy Spirit dwelling within) are his rule. And within the bounds of that (within the bounds of his light, his life, his motions, his inſtructions) man never errs; but out of it, deceit, and darkneſs, and error is always at hand.

Yet (though we do own Chriſt to be the rule) we do not deny making uſe of the ſcriptures to try doctrines and forms of religion by; but know, that what is of God, doth and will agree therewith; and what doth not agree therewith, is not of God; and that our fore-fathers in the faith were led to batter the ſuperſtitions and idolatries of the Papiſts, by the teſtimony of the ſcriptures. And we have alſo the teſtimony of the ſcriptures with us, both to the light and Spirit within, and againſt forms formerly invented, or now practiſed, out of the life and power. But we believe the

the Spirit to be a touch-ſtone beyond the ſcriptures, and to be that which giveth ability to try and diſcern, not only words, but ſpirits; whereas a man may hold the form of doctrine and godlineſs, and yet want the power: in which caſe, nothing can try ſuch a ſpirit, but the Spirit of God, which is in the ſpiritual man. And for calling the ſcriptures the Word of God, we cannot but look upon it as an improper expreſſion, They being Many Words, not the One Word; and Chriſt is called in the ſcripture, not only the Word God, but the Word of God. And if, in the fear of the Lord, and true ſenſe, we keep herein to the expreſſions of ſcripture, and its form of words, which are ſound; ſurely we cannot juſtly be blamed for ſo doing.

But whereas ye affirm the ſcripture to be the rule; conſider ſeriouſly, and anſwer me this queſtion, *How is it a rule? Whether it be a rule, as it is literally underſtood?* Or, *Whether it muſt not be interpreted, before it can be underſtood as a rule?* If it muſt be interpreted, *What muſt be the interpreter; whether muſt it be the Spirit of God, or a man's wiſdom?*

As to that queſtion, *Whether the writings of any now be of equal weight with the ſcriptures*; I have this to ſay:

The weight of the words which are from God's Spirit, is according to the ſtrength of life which he pleaſeth to clothe them with. He ſent forth Moſes, the prophets, the Son in that body of fleſh, the apoſtles, in his name and authority; and the angel that he ſends with the everlaſting goſpel, after the apoſtaſy, to preach to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, he ſends not without his authority; yea, the meſſage that he thus ſends in any age, hath a peculiar reference to the ſtate of the world, and the ſtate of the people of God in that age; and none can ſlight it (whether it be ſignified by word or writing) without daſhing againſt God's authority, and deſpiſing him that ſpeaketh in theſe latter days. Yea, the immediate word of the Lord, ſpoken and declared at this day, by any man to whom it pleaſeth the Lord to commit the ſame,

is of no leſs authority, nor more to be ſlighted now, than it was in his ſervants in the days paſt, by whom the ſcriptures were given forth.

Concerning Chriſt.

CHRIST is that word of eternal life, which was glorified with the Father before the world was; who in the full appointed time took up the body of fleſh prepared by the Father, to do the will in, and did the will in it, fulfilling all righteouſneſs, to the ſatisfaction of the very heart of the Father; for whoſe name's ſake the ſins of believers are pardoned. And this ſame word of eternal life, and no other, which took that body of fleſh upon him, is alſo manifeſted, and dwelleth in the hearts of his ſaints; who (as they receive him in the faith which is of him) dwells in them richly, manifeſting in the veſſel the treaſures of his divine wiſdom and knowledge. Now, this is the precious knowledge of Chriſt indeed; and this is it every one is to wait for, to find a meaſure of the ſame life, the fulneſs whereof dwells in him bodily, dwelling in our mortal bodies, and making us like unto him, in ſpirit, nature, and converſation. And he that knoweth not, but oppoſeth this, (in any of its appearances, or operations) either in himſelf or others, is ſo far of the dark antichriſtian ſpirit.

Concerning the Form of Sound Words.

NOT only the form of ſound words, but alſo the good knowledge of the heavenly things themſelves, have been miſerably loſt, and buried in the ruins of the great apoſtaſy. And though God hath oftentimes touched mens ſpirits, and given them ſome ſenſe of the antichriſtian ſtate of darkneſs; yet have they not had that regard thereunto, ſo as to be led thereby out of the ſtate of darkneſs, but are found in Babylon,

Babylon, by the Spirit of the Lord, at the very time of his coming to deſtroy her. For though the Spirit of the Lord call out of Babylon, yet there is great danger of not obſerving and following the call; but of abiding ſtill there, and partaking of her plagues.

Now, though men have had the ſcriptures, yet wanting the Spirit of God, and not knowing how to turn their minds thereto, and diſtinguiſh his voice from the voice of their own ſpirits and reaſonings, (yea, of the enemy alſo, who lieth in wait to ſteal into mens minds falſe apprehenſions from the ſcriptures) they have not come into a clear underſtanding, either of the things or words of ſcripture; but with that knowledge, and thoſe apprehenſions of things, which they have gathered, they have many times been ready to fight rather againſt Chriſt than antichriſt; and ſo their confeſſions of faith, and expoſitions of ſcriptures, have been mixed things; rather ſuiting to their own beliefs and apprehenſions, than the true nature of the things themſelves: yea, by this gathered knowledge they have been in great danger of a deſperate oppoſing the pure adminiſtration of God's truth, from and in the light and power of his own Spirit. Likewiſe the churches they have gathered and built up, they have done in a way of imitation of what was done once formerly by the power, and in the authority, of the Spirit; but not in the ſame power, life, and authority. I might ſay the ſame about their ordinances and duties; wherein the Lord (God knoweth) hath manifeſted to others, and can manifeſt to them, that they have erred very much.

It is true, ye have rejected ſome wood, hay, and ſtubble; and we acknowledge the Lord's goodneſs to you, in that ye have gone ſo far. Yea, but there is yet more to be rejected; and all imitations, and knowledges, and interpretations of ſcripture out of the pure life, are to be laid aſide; and the Spirit of the Lord waited upon, in the light which is of him; to which the mind is to be turned from the darkneſs, and in which it is to abide. Now here ye are very ſhort;

not so much as to come to the outward owning or understanding of the way; so far are ye from walking therein.

That ye seek to find the power and operation of truth in your hearts, I do believe concerning divers of you; and do bless the Lord in reference to any of you that it is so with you; and from my heart desire for you, that your hearts may be answered by the Lord therein, and that ye may feel preservation through that which is of him in you; though distinctly ye know it not, nor how to have your minds turned towards, and to wait upon, the Lord in it.

So to seek to have Christ formed in you, and to know union with him, and a real implanting into him; to know him as a vine, as head, a living stone, a root, as meat indeed, and drink indeed, &c. this is precious indeed to desire, but much more precious to witness: and oh! that ye also knew the way, the living way, wherein God communicateth these things abundantly, to those who once sat in the desolate and barren places, mourning and sorely crying out for the want of them; for then ye would not oppose us for turning people from darkness to light, but be one with us therein!

The integrity which is in any of you, is of God; and though the soul mistake about a duty or ordinance, yet the cry therein after him is not wholly rejected and despised by him. But ye would know much more of him, if ye were acquainted with him in his own way, and worshipped him in the everlasting ordinance, which is the pure light of his Son; which was before the letter, brings the soul nearer to the Lord than the letter can, and gives a fuller communion with the Lord in Spirit, than can be had or enjoyed through words or conceptions of things. And the end of the letter's testimony is to bring into the Spirit and power, which is the administration of the gospel.

Concern-

Concerning inward Impreſſions.

ALL the impreſſions which are from the holy pure power of the living God, are of the goſpel adminiſtration, and are of great uſe and virtue; and he that is gathered out of the dark power, into the pure power of God, who is light, and who gathers into the light, by the meſſage and miniſtration of the goſpel, in that light hath a diſcerning of the power into which he is gathered, from the power out of which he is gathered. And here he neither can nor dares receive any impreſſion of the dark ſpirit and power, (which is known and experienced to work in great ſubtilty and deceivableneſs) nor refuſe any motion or impreſſion which is of the Pure and Holy One. But ye lay the great ſtreſs upon owning doctrinals according to your apprehenſions of them; whereas ye muſt come much further out of Babylon, out of man's ſpirit and wiſdom, more into the pure fear and waiting upon God, more into the ſenſe and power of truth, and into the light and knowledge which is thereof, before your doctrinals can be owned and ſubſcribed to, by that which is of God. And this ſprings in my heart in true love, and tenderneſs, and melting bowels concerning you: Oh! that ye held the head! I queſtion not, but that ye hold notions about the head, according to your underſtanding of things; but to hold the head is a far deeper thing than ſo.

As for that paſſage about communion with God, apply it; Oh! apply it, or rather wait for the Spirit of the Lord to apply it cloſe to your hearts! For it is poſſible, by his light and Spirit in his own due ſeaſon, he may make manifeſt to you, that much of that which goeth with you for communion with God, is not really ſo; and, indeed, in the true love and upright tenderneſs of my heart towards you, I would not have you miſtaken about theſe things. As for raptures, the error is eaſy; but in that which lies low in the pure fear is the preſervation. And, friend, I pray

conſider this queſtion which is now in my heart to thee. Thou ſpeakeſt of departing from the faith: Ah! friend, art thou yet come to the faith? Do not anſwer it ſlightly; for I put it not ſlightly to thee, nor without a cauſe. For through the faith of the Son of God, an other-guiſe knowledge, and ſenſe of things, in this day of the Lord's power, is received, than thou haſt yet attained.

That a man's doctrinals are right according to ſcripture in all the main ſubſtantials, is no infallible rule to try what power it is that works in him, or what his ſpirit is; becauſe deceit works in a myſtery; and the ſpirit of error may come in ſheep's clothing, and may get good words and fair ſpeeches to deceive the hearts of the ſimple. And there were thoſe that held a form of godlineſs, and had not the true power, but denied it; and ſuch were to be turned from; becauſe, denying the true power, they denied the Lord that bought them, and ſo held not the head; and he that doth ſo, whatſoever he holds of the doctrine of ſcriptures, hath ſufficient cauſe to queſtion his communion with God, and alſo the truth of his raviſhments and ſpiritual enjoyments, and all his duties and graces.

Again; a man may apprehend his doctrinals to be right, as to the main ſubſtantials, when indeed they are not ſo. For the doctrines of the goſpel are myſteries. Faith is a myſtery; the love of God in the Spirit a myſtery; obedience to the truth a myſtery; the right confeſſion of Chriſt in and through the Spirit a myſtery; the worſhip of God in Spirit a myſtery; juſtification, ſanctification, and the peace and joy of the Spirit, myſteries of the kingdom, &c. and it is eaſy miſſing and miſunderſtanding theſe things, but hard to come to the true knowledge of them; and if any of the true, inward, ſpiritual knowledge of theſe things be received at any time, it is hard retaining it, nay, impoſſible rightly ſo to do, but in that which gave it. And indeed this is the great myſtery of religion; to wit, to begin in the Spirit, and ſo to travel on in the pure light, life, and knowledge thereof, and not to

to entertain or mix with any thing of the fleſh. But now if a man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, or if he be not able to diſtinguiſh the Spirit of Chriſt, in its voice, motions, and workings, from the other Spirit, and from his own wiſdom and underſtanding; when he reads a ſcripture, he may eaſily err and miſtake about the doctrines thereof, and let in ſomewhat of his own, or the other ſpirit's forming, inſtead of that which is the pure truth of God. And then this which he hath ſo let in, will cauſe him to misjudge concerning the truth, when God manifeſts and brings it forth purely and unmixedly in others, and make him a great enemy to it.

This was the caſe of the Scribes and Phariſees and great prieſts, in the time of Chriſt; they ſtudied the law, gave interpretations of it, being appointed by God to preſerve the people's knowledge; and by their underſtanding of the law and prophets, Chriſt could not be the Meſſiah; for, plainly, that appearance of his diſagreed with the law and the prophets, according to their underſtanding of them. Chriſt was to abide for ever; but he ſaid the Son of man muſt be lifted up. Yea, the very diſciples themſelves underſtood not this for a long time: and if the ſenſe of the life and power of the Father in him, had not bowed down their ſpirits, they alſo would have reaſoned againſt him in many things. "When Chriſt cometh, no man "knoweth whence he is: but we know this man "whence he is." And when Nicodemus (who was touched with the ſenſe of his power) ſeemed to favour him; what ſaid they to him? "Search and look, for "out of Galilee ariſeth no prophet." And they themſelves, in ſearching, and looking, and trying by the ſcriptures, found him not agree with Moſes, and the law which he had given from God (who they ſaid they knew was *of God*): but whereas Moſes had given a ſtrict command about the ſabbath, upon which there was no work to be done, nor burthen borne, &c. he, on the other hand, bids a man "take up his bed and "walk on the ſabbath-day. How could this be the

" Meſſiah, of whom Moſes wrote" (would they ſay in their hearts)? Would he teach and practiſe contrary to Moſes? So that there is no certain trying by the ſcriptures, further than a man is certain that he hath the underſtanding of thoſe ſcriptures which he trieth by, from God's Spirit. For was not this plain to them, that no burthen was to be borne on the ſabbath? And do they not herein (according to their underſtandings and knowledge of the ſcripture) find Chriſt contrary to Moſes and the prophets? What then would follow naturally? A deceiver! a deceiver! would they preſently cry. He cannot be of God; let him talk of what power he will, it cannot be God's power: we need a further ſign from him, before we can believe him to be the Meſſiah.

But the way of trying doctrines by the unerring Spirit, and pure light of truth in the heart, is certain and infallible. He who is truth, and no lie, never deceives about truth; yea, the very inſtinct of his life and nature diſtinguiſhes things truly, and never teaches the heart to err, who is acquainted with it, and keepeth to it. And what is the Spirit which is given, and why is he given? Is he not above the letter? And where he is received, is he not to be acknowledged above it? Is not his law of light, written by his finger in the heart, above any literal deſcription or command of it? We muſt ſet the Spirit above the ſcriptures, and the miniſtration of the Spirit above the miniſtration of the letter. We cannot be clear before the Lord, in giving way to any profeſſors on the earth herein, but muſt teſtify for God againſt them. Yea, he that hath received the anointing, and knoweth how it teacheth, and how it preſerveth from all that ſeduceth, cannot but give the honour to it, and acknowledge that it is the great ordinance of God in the goſpel even above and beyond the letter. And till he is ſo known and received, men can never be able to diſtinguiſh the truths of God, as held forth by him in the ſcriptures of truth, from their own conceivings and apprehenſions about things, but will be

be ready to take their own apprehenſions and conceivings for truth; and having ſo done, they cannot but miſſee, miſtake, and misjudge about that which is truth indeed. So that the doctrine which they thus ſet up, is not indeed the doctrine of truth according to the ſcriptures, but rather that which they conceive and have imagined ſo to be.

So that, whereas thou ſayeſt, "Your religion conſiſts, firſt, of right apprehenſions," &c. we, on the other hand, cannot but teſtify, as we have been convinced by the Lord, and felt and underſtood in him that is true, that a man muſt firſt receive the Spirit, before he can have right apprehenſions about the myſtery of God, Chriſt, &c. becauſe the Spirit ſearcheth the deep things of God; and the things of God knows no man but by the Spirit; therefore, there is a neceſſity for people firſt to be turned to the Spirit of God, as being the firſt ſtep in the way to true ſaving knowledge.

Concerning the Light.

CHRIST, who had all power given him by the Father, and authority to ſend forth meſſengers to preach the goſpel of his ſalvation, he ſent forth his apoſtles and ſervants to teſtify and declare of it.

That which they were to preach and teſtify of, was, "That which was from the beginning;" even the "eternal life, which was with the Father, and was "manifeſted unto them." And this is the meſſage which they heard of him, and were to declare to others, "That God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all." And this word of faith, this word which was from the beginning, this word which reconciles the ſoul to God, they were to preach, as near in the heart and in the mouth. And the intent of their preaching and teſtifying of this, was to turn men to it; from the darkneſs within to the light within; from the power of Satan within, to the power of God within. Thus was the goſpel preached before the apoſtaſy, and thus it is again preached after the apoſtaſy;

taſy; and this light, this life, this power of the inviſible word, is witneſſed again to become the ſalvation, as it was before the apoſtaſy.

Now here, being turned to this, this diſcovers the darkneſs, the loſt eſtate, the captivity, the bands, the miſery of the ſoul, and gives to long after the Saviour; and not only ſo, but it alſo ſheweth the Saviour whom it cauſeth the ſoul to long after; and in the waiting upon the Saviour in the light which is of him, giveth to partake of his ſalvation.

And ſo here we come to have that work of God renewed in our hearts and ſpirits, which at any time was formerly wrought; and wrought more clearly and effectually; as it muſt needs be, as the mind is turned toward and gathered into the pure light, life, and power. And in this we are taught to own Chriſt, as he appeared in that body of fleſh, and what he did in the life and virtue of the Father; yea, the preciouſneſs of that his ſacrifice, both in its own nature, and in the eye of the Father; and we bleſs the Lord for him, and believe in the Father through him. Yea, we bleſs the Lord for the declarations of the good things in the ſcriptures, and read them with joy and thankfulneſs to the Father, and in the watch againſt that which would imagine about them; for we know any ſuch thing (let into the mind) darkens. So that we do not fall ſhort in a true owning of Chriſt, as he appeared in that body; and alſo we know and own the ſame word of eternal life appearing in us; ſo that we can ſay truly with the apoſtle, "It hath pleaſed "the Father to reveal the Son in us, and it is the "eternal life, it is the Son indeed of the Holy God, "and not another."

Now, for that way of working which thou ſpeakeſt of, of ſeeing a man's nakedneſs, filthineſs, wretched, loſt, undone condition; of being convinced of his own impotency; that his help is not in himſelf; that all his righteouſneſs is as filthy rags; of crying out, what ſhall I do! Woe is me, I am undone! What ſhall I do to be ſaved? How ſhall I appear before the Lord?

And

And ſo of mourning in ſecret, and the ſore running, &c. and the diſcovery of Chriſt, as was in that day, as offered without money, without price, &c. and ſo the ſoul's humble and cordial caſting itſelf upon him, &c. and deſiring to know him, not only as a Saviour, but as a Lord alſo, reigning over it, &c. All this we knew, in the true and ſenſible experience, as it was revealed in that day. But we knew not the word of life within to be the word (though we felt operations from it); and ſo were not founded upon the rock, upon the word of life, as revealed within; and ſo when the ſtorms came, they had greater power upon our ſpirits than we believed they could poſſibly have. And now in the Lord's freſh viſiting of us, we have not loſt any thing we had before, nor do deny any thing that God wrought in us then; but have it again with advantage, and precious additions, from the Lord God, in that pure light of life wherewith he hath viſited us.

And now God having demonſtrated this thing to us, ſhewing us what it is, and giving us to partake of the precious virtues of it; how can we call it leſs than a meaſure of Chriſt, of his Spirit; than the ſeed of the kingdom; than the heavenly leaven, &c.? knowing and experiencing it aſſuredly to be that very thing which Chriſt ſo called in his parables; and that in you which is offended at us for it, we know to be not the true birth, but the birth of another wiſdom, which is to be caſt out with its mother: and it will be a happy day with you, if ever ye come to witneſs the caſting of it out; which ye can never do, till ye come to know, and own, and be ſubject to, Chriſt within, to the pure commandment and Word of life in the heart, to the law which cometh out of Sion, and to the teſtimony and word of the Lord from Jeruſalem. And they that come not to know it caſt out of them by the power, they thereby will be caſt out with it.

But that there are ſome glimmerings of light remaining in fallen man, directing concerning many things morally good, as to honour parents, to deal juſtly, to do as we would be done unto, &c. there is, thou

thou ſayeſt, a light diſcovering theſe things as duties, and the contrary to be evil, and there is alſo ſome anſwerable ſtrength to come up to ſuch moralities. If thou meaneſt a light diſtinct from the Spirit and divine nature of God, I deſire thee to manifeſt it from ſcripture: for Adam was to die the death that very day that he ſinned. And the death and curſe came upon his poſterity, who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; but the light that diſcovers and leads out of evil is from Chriſt. That which maketh ſin manifeſt, is his light. I read, that the grace which bringeth ſalvation hath appeared to all men; and that that teaches men to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and gives them ſtrength ſo to do; and that it is the work of the Spirit to convince of ſin; and that the Spirit of the Lord ſtrived with the old world to reduce them from their evil ways; and that he gave the Jews his good Spirit to inſtruct them, but they rebelled againſt him: but that there are ſome glimmerings of light diſtinct from the Spirit of Chriſt, teaching fallen man to do this, and ſome anſwerable ſtrength in him to walk up thereto, I read not.

It is the promiſe of the new covenant, that God will write his laws in the heart; and whatever of his law is written in any man's heart, it is by virtue thereof; for man is dead unto God's law naturally, and his eye blinded by the God of the world; but that which opens his eye to ſee what the law ſaith, is the light of the Spirit. For that which maketh manifeſt is light; and that which may be known of God in the Gentiles, is made manifeſt to them by the light of God in them; which ſhineth in their darkneſs, but their darkneſs cannot comprehend it; but it fathometh and comprehendeth the darkneſs, and is able to gather the mind out of it, being ſubjected to it, in the will which it creates and begets, through the eternal power which viſits by it, and is preſent with it, to work the mind out of, and deliver it from, the darkneſs. And as this light comes from Chriſt (" for he is the true " light, that enlighteneth every man that cometh into " the

" the world") ſo it diſcovers and maketh manifeſt Chriſt, in his nature and Spirit, and leadeth and guideth towards him; and he that is led to him in Spirit, and born of him in Spirit, cannot miſs of the benefit and virtue of what he did in that body of fleſh; being gathered into, and found in, that which is of him, to which all belongs. And in and by this is received that nature wherein the law is anſwered; and the work of anſwering the law, is through the renewing of the mind, and an evidence of ſomewhat of a new nature; every degree of which nature is begotten and maintained by Chriſt, the power of God; who is over the fall, and the whole corruption thereof. But by the old corrupt nature or mind, can no man do the things contained in the law; for it is enmity againſt God, and is not ſubject to his holy law; neither indeed can be. But the law is ſpiritual, holy, juſt, and good, converting the ſoul, and making wiſe the ſimple; which work it effecteth, wherever it is written in the heart, by the finger of God's Spirit.

Then again, as touching God's imputing Chriſt's active and paſſive obedience, &c. we do not lay the ſtreſs of juſtification in believing a notion, concerning Chriſt's active and paſſive obedience; but this we know, that Chriſt did obey and ſuffer, and that it was for our ſakes; and that, for his ſake, there is a gift given us from the Father, to draw us to Chriſt; and that he that is overcome to God, by the gift of his light, is thereby drawn out of the darkneſs; and that that gift brings every man (that hears the heavenly voice thereof, and follows it) into the Son's light, into the Son's nature, into the Son's life, into the Son's Spirit; in which, the Gentiles might partake of remiſſion of ſins for his ſake, being gathered thereby out of the darkneſs, into his light and power. For though they had never heard the outward ſound or name Chriſt; yet feeling the thing, and being gathered to God by the thing, the value and virtue of it could not but redound to them: for it is not the outward name, but the inward life and power, which is the Saviour.

And

And whereas the voice of the Spirit ſaith, "Ho, "every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters;" what are the waters to which the thirſty are invited to come? Did we not believe in Chriſt, and caſt ourſelves on Chriſt in that day, according as thou apprehendeſt? And yet the thirſt and cry of our ſouls was not ſatiſfied. But the living waters ſatisfy the thirſt. Nor is it a believing a relation concerning the thing; but a receiving of the thing, of the milk, of the wine, of the living water, which anſwers the deſire of the thirſty ſoul. And by coming to the living waters, and hearing the living voice, and eating and drinking the living food, the ſoul lives, and the everlaſting covenant is made with it, even the ſure mercies of David, which are ſure in the covenant of life for ever. And thoſe that are living, in and by the true life, cannot deſire to reap and enjoy any thing out of the new covenant of life, but only in it.

This is in my heart concerning you: Ye lay the ſtreſs upon a notion, and upon an act of the creature from and upon a notion; which they that are out of the life may perform; and who (that hath any ſenſe of a man in him) would not perform, to avoid periſhing? That is, who would not thus caſt himſelf upon Chriſt, if believing after ſuch a manner would ſave him? And yet there is alſo a difference, a very great difference, between doing of it now, when Chriſt is generally owned as the Saviour, and doing it then, when he was generally diſowned. In them who thus believed, it argued the teachings of the life and power ſo to do; but now the form of owning Chriſt is far more common than any form or way of diſowning him. So that now, not the word, nor the form, nor the outward owning, or the caſting of the ſoul upon Chriſt, is ſo much to be conſidered or valued; but rather the power, the light, the life, the gift, wherein and whereby this is alone rightly and truly done. And he that owneth Chriſt aright, will own that which is of Chriſt, the manifeſtation and gift of his Spirit, the ſhining of his pure light, firſt in the darkneſs, and then

then out of the darkneſs, to that mind which it hath gathered and preſerveth out of the darkneſs.

And then for being complete in Chriſt in a relative way, while the heart is unmortified, and unſubdued to God; it is a dangerous miſtaking about theſe things. I do confeſs that ſins are pardoned upon a true belief, and the ſoul enters into the covenant of life, and is accepted with the Lord, as it finds entrance thereinto, and walks therein. And there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt, "who walk not "after the fleſh, but after the Spirit." But if there be an hearkening to the fleſh, and walking after the luſts and deſires thereof, is there no condemnation then? Is not the juſtification in the covenant, and according to the laws of the covenant? Alas! alas! how do men imagine concerning things! and ſo in their imaginations juſtify themſelves wherein the Lord condemns them; and know not the way of the covenant, and of the juſtification thereof. For there is a new covenant, as well as an old (and the new is not like the old); and a walking with God in the new covenant; and every ſtep in it his life juſtifies, and every ſtep out of it his life condemns; and the Mediator of the new covenant juſtifies it according to the new covenant, and never otherwiſe. For the way of God is perfect (the way of life, the way of reconciliation, the way of redemption), and the ſoul is only accepted and juſtified of the Lord therein. Yea, juſtification is a myſtery to man's wiſdom and underſtanding, with all his knowledge he can gather from ſcripture: and he only knows it who feels it, and hath the experience of it, in that which is true, and which cannot deceive.

Concerning Juſtification.

THE apoſtle James ſaith expreſly, That by works a man is juſtified, and not by faith only; and his words were from God's Spirit, and are true, and the Lord ſaw an uſe and ſervice of them. There are works

works which are excluded the covenant of life, and there are works which are not excluded, no not to juſtification. There are works required by the covenant; works wrought in the faith and by the power of God; and when they are brought to the light, it is made manifeſt that they were wrought in God; even works that are of his Son, wrought in the life and by the Spirit of his Son, and theſe the Father always juſtifieth. Yet we do not ſay this is a man's juſtification for his ſins paſt, but they are forgiven for his name's ſake: nor do they expiate ſins afterward committed, &c. but the advocate intercedes, and his blood waſhes them away. But this we ſay, that alone in the faith, in the obedience of the new covenant, the juſtification of the new covenant is witneſſed: and the new covenant juſtifieth no ſin, nor the ſoul in ſin; but purgeth away the ſin, and juſtifieth from it, waſhing off the venom and defilement of the wicked ſpirit from the conſcience, which the Lord purgeth by the faith, and by the virtue of the water and blood which the faith brings in.

Now having been led by God into the pure covenant of life, and having there had the true ſenſe, knowledge, and experience of things, even of the truth as it is in Jeſus, we cannot but ſpeak and teſtify of it as we have felt and received it; and here we know and find certainly and infallibly, that it is not the law of works which juſtifieth the believer, nor the obedience or righteouſneſs thereof; but there is a righteouſneſs revealed, of an higher nature and kind than that righteouſneſs of the law, which is made the ſoul's in and by the faith. And this is Chriſt's righteouſneſs, the righteouſneſs of his life, the righteouſneſs of his nature, the righteouſneſs of his Spirit, which is revealed in the ſoul, and which, in the union with Chriſt, becomes the ſoul's, and Chriſt thereby is made of God unto us righteouſneſs. And the works which are wrought in man by this righteous Spirit and holy power, are of far more value in themſelves, and

and of more acceptation with God, than man's obedience to the law could be, could he obey ever ſo exactly; for theſe are from an higher principle, and of a far more excellent nature, ſpirit and kind, than man's nature and ſpirit is; and yet the acceptance is not for the works' ſake, but for the ſake of the worker of theſe works.

Concerning God's Love to Mankind.

GREAT is the love of God to mankind, who deſireth not their deſtruction, but their redemption and ſalvation from that which deſtroyeth. Now from and according to this love, he ſent Chriſt as a ranſom, a propitiation for the ſins of the whole world: and not only ſo, but he hath given him as a light to enlighten all the dark parts of the earth, that every ſoul might believe in his light, and by its guidance and power come out of the darkneſs: and the free gift is as large and as powerful to ſave, as the offence or offences are to deſtroy. So that God hath not only ſaid it, but he hath manifeſted that he deſireth not the death of a ſinner; but would have all men to be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of his truth, and gift of his grace, that they might be ſaved thereby. And this is the goſpel, even the grace which bringeth ſalvation, and the power of eternal life, to all mens doors; by and in which the Spirit of the Lord God (who is able to ſave) ſtrives with them and in them (according to his pleaſure) againſt the enemy.

Now for men to interpret a ſcripture ſo as to overturn this, contrary to the very drift of the goſpel, and contrary to the very nature and heart of God, they do not well, nor by the guidance of his Spirit in ſo doing. And now in love to thee, though I have not much freedom to open theſe things, knowing that they are above the ſtate of moſt people to underſtand, and that it is rather proper for them to wait in what is clear and manifeſt, than to meddle with things hard

to be underſtood, and deeply myſterious, before the Spirit of the Lord opens them to them: yet I ſay, in love I find freedom in the Lord to ſay a little to thee. Mind the words of the apoſtle, in fear and reverence towards the Lord. "What if God, willing to ſhew "his wrath, and to make his power known, endured "with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of his wrath "fitted to deſtruction?"

Now conſider, how is *God willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make the power of his deſtroying a veſſel* known? Is it a thing natural to him? Is it not contrary to his nature to deſtroy? Any who can teſtify any thing of the life of God in their hearts, do they find any thing of a deſtroying nature in it? Chriſt, who was the expreſs image of God, did not he come to ſave? Did he come to deſtroy any? And when any reſiſted the counſel of God againſt themſelves, was it not grievous to him? "O Jeruſalem! Jeruſalem! how often would "I have gathered thee!" Here the heart of God towards the ſons of men may be read, as in a true glaſs. And before the Lord gives them up to deſtruction, doth he not endure them with much long-ſuffering? And is it not the proper intent of the goodneſs, forbearance, and long-ſuffering of God to lead men to repentance? Rom. ii. 4. And they that are led by the long-ſuffering to repent, do they not witneſs it ſalvation? 2 Pet. iii. 15. Ah! wait on God, that thou mayeſt underſtand theſe things from him as they are; and not according to the imaginations and reaſonings of thine own wiſdom and underſtanding. It hath been a long night of darkneſs, wherein many miſapprehenſions and falſe conceivings upon ſcriptures have been ſwallowed down, which the Lord pitied us under, and bare with us in them; but now it is high time to bow down to and receive that light which purgeth the veſſel from all ſuch miſapprehenſions and miſconceivings, which are as really hay and ſtubble in the ſight of God, as the groſſeſt darkneſs of popery is.

Concerning

Concerning Baptiſm.

WE own the one baptiſm; and, bleſſed be the Lord, are baptized therewith into one body. That of water was but the forerunner's, but the ſhadow of Chriſt's baptiſm, which is with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now when Chriſt ſent his apoſtles to preach and baptize, did he ſend them to baptize with the forerunner's baptiſm, or with his own baptiſm, when he ſaid, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them into "the name," &c.? Paul profeſſeth openly he was not ſent to baptize, but to preach the goſpel. Was he not an apoſtle? Had he not ſeen the Lord? Had he not his commiſſion from him? Did not the apoſtolick commiſſion contain baptiſm as fully as preaching? Is it not ſaid, "He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall "be ſaved?" Yes, without doubt, it did contain Chriſt's baptiſm (without which there is no ſalvation) as well as preaching; but the baptiſm of water, which was a figure of the thing (which Paul did find freedom to do to ſome) Paul ſaid he was not ſent to do. He did it not by commandment, but he might do it by permiſſion, as well as circumciſe; which was another figure of the ſame thing.

Concerning Perfection.

CHRIST is a perfect phyſician, and is able to work a perfect cure on the heart that believeth in him, and waiteth upon him: yea, he came to deſtroy the works of the devil, to cleanſe man's mind of the darkneſs and power of Satan, and to fill it with the life and power of truth; and he ſent forth a miniſtry not only for the beginning, but for the perfecting of the work: yea, his Word in the mouth and heart is powerful, ſharper than a two-edged ſword, and he can caſt out the ſtrong man, and cut down all that is corrupt and contrary to himſelf, and break down every

ſtrong hold in the mind, and ſpoil all the goods of the enemy. Chriſt likewiſe bids his diſciples "be perfect, "as their heavenly Father is perfect;" and the apoſtle bids men "perfect holineſs in the fear of God," that they might be fully ſeparated from, and not ſo much as touch, the unclean thing; but enjoy the promiſes of God's dwelling in them, and walking in them, whoſe temple under the goſpel is to be pure. And if a man wait upon God in the work of purifying, and witneſs the power and virtue of the new covenant, even the fear put into the heart, which keepeth the heart clean, and will not ſuffer it to depart from the Lord, and witneſs the powerful law of the endleſs life giving him dominion over the law of ſin and death in the members, and the Spirit of the Lord put within him, cauſing him to walk in his ways, and to keep his ſtatutes and do them; ſurely this man cometh near to perfection. Did Chriſt cure perfectly outwardly in the days of his fleſh; and ſhall he not cure perfectly inwardly in the day of his Spirit? Yes, certainly; the lame, the deaf, the blind, the dumb, the lepers waiting upon him in the day of his covenant, ſhall be cured by him as perfectly inwardly, as ever the others were outwardly. And then is the day of joy, and of reaping the good things which the promiſes contain, feeding on the feaſt of fat things on God's holy mountain, in peace of ſpirit, in ſecurity from the ſoul's enemies, none of them being able to come near to hurt or deſtroy; nay, not ſo much as to make afraid on the mountain of God's holineſs: and then the ſong of Moſes, and the ſong of the Lamb is ſung, and walking in the way of holineſs witneſſed; which no unclean thing can paſs over to, but only the ranſomed and redeemed of the Lord.

Now if any man come in truth to witneſs this from the Lord, and hath found by his conſuming fire the droſs burnt up in him, and his ſoul cleanſed from what is corrupt and unrighteous; doth he deceive himſelf, or is he a liar, if he ſay the Lord hath cleanſed me from all my unrighteouſneſs? And did John ſpeak here

here of his own ſtate, or of the ſtate of the other apoſtles and believers, who were grown up in the life and power of truth, and had overcome the wicked one, by the ſtrength of Chriſt in them? Or did he ſpeak condeſcendingly (as the apoſtles often did with the weak: becoming as weak, when they were exalted by God to an higher ſtate than that condition ſignified)? Had he not fellowſhip with the Father and the Son? And was not his joy full? And is the joy of any full, while ſin, while corruption, is near and hath power; while Satan, while the powers of darkneſs, are not trodden under foot? There is a ſtate of righteouſneſs without Chriſt, wherein if a man ſay he hath no ſin (and ſo thinks he hath no need of Chriſt) he deceives himſelf. But there is a power in Chriſt to perfect the work of redemption in the heart; to ſanctify the creature wholly, in body, ſoul, and ſpirit; yea, his leaven received will work, and works daily, till it hath wrought all out, and the whole be leavened; and he that truly feeleth it ſo, and can ſay in God's preſence, and in the true fear and humility of heart, The old leaven is wholly wrought out, and the new hath wholly leavened me; this is not the voice of deceit, but of truth in him.

As for that queſtion, Whether Chriſt hath not reigned in his Spirit all along in the ſouls of his true people?

Anſ. There hath been little of Chriſt's reign in Spirit witneſſed all along the apoſtaſy. It is a great matter to come to witneſs Chriſt's reign in the heart: yea, there are many who never yet came through the ſuffering which goes before the reign: but the croſs, the power of the croſs, and the thorough death thereby of all that ſtands in the way of Chriſt's pure reigning, is yet to be taken up, and many journeys to be gone, before men come to witneſs Chriſt's kingdom, and the reign of his Spirit therein?

There are ſome other paſſages which I find in my heart to ſay ſomewhat to. One is this: "That ye "know through mercy when ye are well; that ye are "ſatisfied," &c.

There hath been a cloudy and a dark day; which, for its thickneſs, may well be called night; wherein the people of the Lord have been ſcattered from mountain to hill, ſeeking their reſting-place.

Now it hath pleaſed the Lord, after this thick night of darkneſs to gather the ſcattered ſheep, and to become the phyſician (in the miniſtration of his Spirit, life, and power) to heal them, and bind them up.

And thoſe that have been ſick and diſtreſſed, and brought into the true ſenſe, they feel the need of the phyſician, and bleſs his name for the healing which he bringeth with him under his wings.

But there are ſome that are fat and ſtrong, and whole and complete by an imputed righteouſneſs, according to their own apprehending; and theſe are well; theſe are ſatisfied; they have no need of this viſitation of God, nor of this diſpenſation of life and power from on high.

There was a church once, before the apoſtaſy took place, that knew the truth better than ye do, that ſaid, She was rich, increaſed with goods, and had need of nothing; and yet wanted the tried gold, the white raiment, and the eye-ſalve. And if ye knew how aright to wait on the Lord, and receive counſel and light from him, perhaps ye might therein ſee alſo, that ye are deſtitute of and want the ſame things.

Now in that we teſtify to you that we have been in your ſtate, and fully experienced it, and ſeen in the light of the Lord the truth thereof, and the defects thereof; and in love, and in the leadings of God's Spirit, are drawn to teſtify thereof to you, and have from him received the knowledge of the living way, which was made manifeſt before the apoſtaſy, and is now again; and are taught and enabled by the Lord to walk with him therein, the Lord having led us into that, and brought us forth in that, from which all the apoſtates have erred, and out of which they all are; this ſhould not be a thing ſlighted by you; but being a weighty teſtimony, and of great concernment to you,

you, ſhould be weightily conſidered of, and determined in you, by that which alone is able to decide it. Now if ye weigh this teſtimony by ſcriptures, and have not a true underſtanding of thoſe ſcriptures from God, ye will but thereby err the more, and be the more confident and hardened in your errors, and ſo go on in a kind of ſatisfaction and peace in kicking againſt the pricks.

And as for our confidence, we can truly ſay in the Spirit of truth, we know that we are of God, gathered unto him by the life and Spirit of his Son revealed in us; and we could eat our bread in ſecret, and drink the water of life out of our own ciſterns ſilently, but that the Lord required us, and his love conſtraineth us, and it is due to the glorious work of his mercy and power towards us, to declare, in the ſeaſons of his chooſing, what the Lord hath done for our poor, diſtreſſed, mourning, wandering, undone ſouls. Now if others are confident without a cauſe; that doth not make void our confidence, which is grounded upon the truth; nor the teſtimony thereof, iſſuing forth from and in the truth: but that which is of God heareth and owneth it, and feeleth the work of his love and great power, and bleſſeth his name therefore.

As for thoſe expreſſions, "It is enough for thee "that Jeſus Chriſt is thine," &c. ſo far as thou feeleſt union with him, in the principle of life which is of him, thou mayeſt ſay ſo truly. But is it not ſtrange, that thou ſhouldſt be of it, and not be able to know and own it, in this day of its manifeſtation; but call the light, which is ſpiritual and eternal, (and gives the true and certain knowledge of Chriſt) natural? What! of God, of Chriſt, (having received the Spirit, the living well) and yet not know the myſtery of life within, nor its pure voice in this preſent day! but limit the unlimited One to a form of words formerly ſpoken by him! how do theſe things agree with what thou profeſſeſt? Surely they are deeply in the miſt, who know not Chriſt from antichriſt; but fight againſt Chriſt and his light, as if it were of anti-

chriſt or nature. Now we are one with any of you (though ye know it not) ſo far as ye know and are of the truth, and feel true union with whatever is of God in you.

Thus in faithfulneſs to God, and in love to truth and tenderneſs to thee, I have given forth that which ſprang in me towards thee. And indeed I ſingly breathe to the Lord in my ſpirit, that it may be ſerviceable in the hands of the Lord for thy good; even to ſhake that knowledge and ſenſe which is not of him in thee, (though thou ſtrongly believeſt it to be of him) and ſo to bring thee to the infallible ſenſe and experience of the true foundation, and to a fixed building and eſtabliſhment in Spirit thereupon, in that light which is of the Father; that therein thou mayeſt own and partake of the miniſtration of the everlaſting and pure power in thy preſent day and generation; which is now ſo diſpenſed, as it hath not been ſince the night of the apoſtaſy. Bleſſed be his name, whoſe light ſhines, whoſe life is made manifeſt, whoſe power is riſen out of, and reigns over, the darkneſs; whoſe love and mercy abounds in the hearts of the redeemed-ones, who abundantly partake of the covenant of life, and of the precious promiſes of the goſpel, to the praiſe of the riches of the grace and mercy which were to be revealed in the ages to come after the apoſtaſy, and are ſo revealed, and are yet more to be revealed, to the increaſe of the glory of his name, and of the joy and conſolation of his redeemed-ones; who find that to be God's power and wiſdom, and mighty redemption to them, which to others is a ſtumbling-block, weakneſs, and fooliſhneſs: and he who ever was, and ſtill is, the life, is once again become a ſtumbling-ſtone, and rock of offence to both the houſes of Iſrael; who though they have longed after him, and breathed for him, and prayed that his kingdom might come; yet now, when he is come, they know him not, but are wiſe and ſtrong in reſiſting and oppoſing him; which is much to their hurt and great danger, as the Lord God ſeeth in the light wherein

wherein he dwells, and as he hath given his children, who dwell with him in the ſame light, to ſee with his eye. And friend; take heed that thou turn not the edge of thy weapon, even of thy ſcripture-knowledge, againſt Chriſt (there were thoſe that once did ſo); nor that thy table becomes thy ſnare: for that was the curſe which lighted on thoſe who oppoſed Chriſt's appearance in fleſh; and it may alſo (in the juſt and moſt righteous judgment of God) befall thoſe who oppoſe his appearance in Spirit in this his day.

And as for what I have written unto thee, thou ſhalt one day witneſs that I have written to thee in true love, and in the true light and ſenſe of truth; and if thou canſt retire into that which is of God in thee, and receive the true ſenſe and underſtanding there, thou wilt there feel it ſo now. And oh! that thou couldſt diſtinguiſh between God's witneſs in thy heart, and the voice of thy underſtanding and gathered knowledge! that thou mighteſt receive a being, life, pure ſenſe, and underſtanding, in that which is pure of God; that the gold might be ſeparated from the droſs, and there might come forth a veſſel for the refiner!

I am a lover of ſouls, and an earneſt deſirer after their welfare; but eſpecially of ſuch as breathe after, and long for, communion with the Lord, in that which is living and pure,

25th of the 11th month, 1667.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

A REPLY

A

REPLY to thy ANIMADVERSIONS.

To the First.

A Man is juſtified upon account of Chriſt, of being in him, believing in him, obeying his goſpel. All theſe have reference to juſtification, according to the ſoul's experience, and according to the ſcriptures, and none of them are to be excluded. God hath appointed Chriſt to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance, faith, and remiſſion of ſins; and in the exerciſe of that repentance and faith, the righteouſneſs and juſtification is received. And the Lord condemns the unbeliever, becauſe he believes not; and the diſobedient, becauſe he obeys not the goſpel: and he alſo juſtifies the believer and the obedient, becauſe of the faith and obedience of his Son which he finds in them. And in this faith, the righteouſneſs, the pure righteouſneſs, flows; the Spirit of the Lord covers; and it is not only the principle, but alſo the garment, of righteouſneſs and ſalvation; yea, all that Chriſt did in the fleſh comes in here, and the ſoul feels and partakes of the virtue and value of it all, being found here. But out of this are the notions and imaginations of mens minds, upon and about ſcriptures concerning the thing; who indeed and in truth (as it really is) know it not.

To the Second.

There are two covenants, and there are works of each, works required by each. In the old covenant, obedience

obedience to the law of Moſes is required. In the new covenant, believing in Chriſt, (" this is the work " of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath " ſent") and obedience to his goſpel and Holy Spirit. Now theſe, and the works of the old, are not one and the ſame, nor have the ſame acceptance and juſtification with the Lord. Nay, though a man could perform all the law of Moſes exactly, yet would he not be therein ſo juſtified in the ſight of God as the believer is; his faith and obedience, which he receiveth from Chriſt, and performeth in the ſtrength of his grace and new life, being of an higher kind, and more excellent nature, than man's fulfilling the law in his own natural capacity and principle can be. I am ſorry thou haſt no better a knowledge and ſavour of the things of the kingdom, than to teſtify a diſlike of this diſtinction. And as for the Papiſts, we meddle not with them, farther than we are led by the Lord: for my part, I know not what they hold as to this thing.

To the Third.

God did threaten the Gentiles (wiſhing them to take heed of boaſting againſt the Jews) that if they did not continue in the faith, and in the fear, they ſhould be cut off, as the Jews were. Now there was a great and general departing from the faith, and anſwerably a general cutting off. And though life was reſerved in a ſelect number in the wilderneſs; yet the true way of gathering into churches and the church-ſtate fell. And now being fallen, the Lord alone is able to rebuild, as he built at firſt. Now men reading the ſcriptures of the glory of the former church-ſtate, have been longing after it, (which was good) but withal too forward to thruſt themſelves into it, and build by imitation, without the clear ſight, leadings, and guidance of the Spirit; and ſo have not built up in the ſame life and power by which the building was at firſt, and can alone be truly raiſed again,

again. Now the Lord being come forth in his power, and raiſing up his own building, the ſame Spirit that raiſeth up that, teſtifieth againſt all the other, which are raiſed up without it. And indeed the teſtimony againſt the preſent churches and congregations gathered out of the power, is God's, not our's. But conſider ſeriouſly; John had a reed given him to meaſure the temple, &c. when part was to be reſerved for God, and part to be given to the Gentiles. But who gave you power to gather churches, or practiſe thoſe which ye call church-ordinances? "Who hath required theſe "things at your hands? And where doſt thou read that the Gentiles did tread down the outward court after it was given them? They trod down the holy city indeed forty-two months.

To the Fourth.

So far as you ſee, hear, taſte, feel any thing in the pure light of the truth, as it is in Jeſus, we rejoice therein; and heartily deſire the increaſe thereof in you: but we would not have you miſtaken about theſe things.

To the Fifth.

Concerning the word or commandment which Moſes ſpeaks of, and which Paul ſaid was the word of faith which they preached.

If the firſt covenant had been faultleſs, there had not been place left for a ſecond. "For if there had "been a law given, which would have given life, "righteouſneſs ſhould have been by that law." But notwithſtanding the wonders which God did in Egypt and the wilderneſs, and the giving the law and ordinances, &c. yet the veil was upon them, and "the "Lord had not given them an heart to perceive, nor "eyes to ſee, nor ears to hear, to that very day," Deut. xxix. 4. Well then; there was a neceſſity of another covenant; and theſe words which Moſes now ſpeaks

ſpeaks to them from God, were words concerning another covenant beſides that made in Horeb.

But where is the commandment of this covenant? Where is the law of this covenant? Where is the Word of this covenant? It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou ſhouldſt ſay, Who ſhall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the ſea; "but the Word is very nigh "unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that "thou mayeſt do it." And this nigh Word of the other covenant, whereby God circumciſeth the heart, to love the Lord God with all the heart, is the Word eternal, and no other; who hath received this power of the Father, and none elſe hath received it: and in the obedience to him, his righteouſneſs is revealed and received, and made the ſoul's, from faith to faith. And it is in vain for you to think to blind our eyes either concerning this ſcripture, or concerning the thing itſelf which this ſcripture teſtifies of; God having opened the eye and heart, which ſees and knows, and in the true light, which is from and of the Word, ſees him who is inviſible and eternal, even the life, holy power, wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, which was in and with the Father before the world was. And this was the Word, before it took up the body of fleſh, and is ſtill the Word, and no other; and its commandment is life eternal; in the pure faith whereof, and in the pure obedience whereto, he giveth life abundantly: but out of the faith and obedience thereto, he doth neither give life, nor the juſtification of life; but the deceits of the enemy there prevail in mens minds concerning theſe things.

Now had the Jews under the law come to this Word, they had by the light thereof underſtood the law, and by the power thereof fulfilled it. And when Chriſt and the apoſtles preached, had they that heard, felt this Word, they could not but in their hearts have believed him to be the Lord, and alſo have confeſſed his reſurrection from the dead; which, in that day, it

was

was a great thing to confeſs, being not revealed by fleſh and blood; nor the teſtimony then eaſily ſwallowed by the fleſhly and earthly part, but generally oppoſed by it. But now theſe things are received and acknowledged by multitudes without the power; and as ſo received, are of no value, nor can ſave; but the owning and receiving, and being born of the Spirit, life, and power, (which was in him) ſaves, and gives ſuch an acknowledgment of theſe things, as is of the life and power, and accepted with the Father.

But, alas! friend, how haſt thou wreſted and perverted this ſcripture, turning aſide the intent of God's Spirit, and putting thine own meaning upon his words, ſtriving to make them ſpeak what thou wouldſt have them! Is this reading of the ſcriptures in reverence, humility, and godly fear? Oh! that God would give thee a ſenſe of what thou haſt done herein! For neither Moſes nor Paul doth thus reſtrain them, nor mention any ſuch ſort of people as thou ſpeakeſt of; but thou, by thy expoſition, makeſt void the mind of God, and the drift of his Spirit in the ſcriptures. If thou haſt, in this wiſdom and latitude of thy own ſpirit, read the ſcriptures, not knowing God's Spirit to gird and limit thee from thine own apprehendings and conceivings, what kind of rule haſt thou made to thyſelf out of them? Ah! friend, if thou knoweſt God's Spirit, keep to it; if thou knoweſt it not, wait for it to become thy guide and leader, and the opener of ſcriptures and the myſteries of the kingdom to thee.

The light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, and the eternal Word or Son of God, is the ſame. And this light ſhining in the darkneſs, ſhineth and enlighteneth with the true light: and the end of its enlightening is, that therein men might feel the drawings of the Father, the ſtrivings of his Spirit; and in the faith thereof, and ſubjection thereto, come out of the darkneſs.

Now the condemnation is not becauſe Chriſt hath not ſufficiently enlightened them, or that there goeth not ſufficient power with his light to redeem from the darkneſs;

darkneſs; but becauſe men turn the deaf ear to him, will not hear him; but in love to the darkneſs, hear the voice of him who dwells in the darkneſs. But the Spirit of Chriſt, who is in the light, and dwells in the light, who ſtrives with the dark world by his light, is able to conquer and overcome the darkneſs. Yea, the Word of life, nigh in the mouth and heart, is able to overcome the power of death there, to quicken, to gather to God, to ſet the captive free, &c. And the reaſon why men periſh, is not through God's inſufficient viſiting of them, but becauſe of their turning from the meaſure of the manifeſtation of his Spirit. They deſpiſe the day of ſmall things; they will not come to that wherein the life and virtue was hid, and ſo loſe the day of their viſitation, and miſs of the good which God intended to them thereby.

And whereas thou ſayeſt, "The light doth not, nor "cannot, diſcover Chriſt, and his being raiſed from "the dead," &c. I cannot but ſay, on the other hand, what doth diſcover them, but the light? How came the ſcriptures to declare of Chriſt? Was it not from the Spirit? And is not that ſame light ſtill with the Spirit, by which the ſcriptures were given forth? And can he not give it forth without the letter, where he ſeeth need of it, and vouchſafeth ſo to do? But how can the vaſt unbelieving multitudes of the world experience what the light and Spirit of the Lord can do, being not ſubject to it, but rebelling againſt it, Job xxiv. 13. And why may not men now, by the light of the Spirit, come to know that Chriſt is come, dead, and riſen, as well as theſe things were known and believed before the ſcriptures were written? Yet, if a man ſhould not know the outward death of Chriſt, and his raiſing from the outward grave; yet being in the faith of the power (which whomſoever it toucheth and draweth to it, it redeems) that gives him a right to all that was done by Chriſt; for then he hath union with the thing which ſaves, and ſtrength from it againſt that which deſtroys. Yea, there was a time when the diſciples of Chriſt were in the faith, and yet neither

neither knew nor believed his death and reſurrection: yea, Peter, with no ſmall confidence, ſaid, "Lord, "this ſhall not be unto thee," Mat. xvi. 22.

As touching that paſſage of renouncing the works not only of the old covenant, but even thoſe of the new alſo, as filthy rags, that is manifeſtly unſcriptural and unſavoury; the works of the new covenant being fruits of God's Holy Spirit, which he works in us and for us. If any man be in Chriſt, there is a new creation (where the old things are paſſed away); and he that walks after this rule, walks in the newneſs of the Spirit, and the Spirit moves, and lives, and works in him. Not I, but Chriſt in me. And as the root is holy, ſo is alſo the fruit. The fear which God puts into the heart is clean, and keeps the heart clean; and out of the good and honeſt, and clean heart, comes good, honeſt, and clean fruit, which is not unclean, like filthy rags. Read Iſai. lxiv. 5. and conſider it, waiting on the Lord to open thine underſtanding. Were the works which the apoſtle ſpeaks of, Heb. xi. and Jam. ii. 24. to be reckoned as filthy rags?

Abraham was acquainted with the inviſible, eternal Word, and was turned from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and in his converted eſtate had the promiſe of the ſeed; and ſaw, with the reſt of the prophets, through the day of his fleſh to the day of his Spirit, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.

David was a ſpiritual man, and knew the Word of the new covenant; which is a lantern to the feet, and a light to the paths, of the children of the new covenant, who witneſs and experience their way cleanſed by taking heed thereto according to this Word. And the precepts, ſtatutes, laws, commandments, ordinances, judgments, &c. of this Word are a myſtery to all that are not acquainted with it. But they that are acquainted with it, and in the pure fear and humility wait upon it, they learn of it the way of its precepts, and are guided by the Spirit of the Lord in the way everlaſting.

The

The wiſdom which Solomon ſpeaks of, is undoubtedly Chriſt, the Word eternal. It is much thou ſhouldſt boggle at this. He is the Sun of the inward world, which enlightens the dark inward world; not that they ſhould abide in the darkneſs, but by the virtue and power of his light come out of it. And friend, mark theſe following words, and wait upon the Lord for the true underſtanding of them. Till thou witneſs the inward Word, with the inward law and teſtimony thereof, and know its commandment to be a lamp, and its law a light, &c. thou canſt never witneſs the perfect keeping and preſervation from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of the ſtrange woman; but wilt be apt to luſt after her beauty in thine heart, and to be taken with her eye-lids. But if thou know and keep wiſdom's commandments, thou wilt thereby witneſs life indeed, according to that ſaying of Chriſt, "If a man keep my ſayings, he ſhall "never ſee death." And Chriſt directed his apoſtles to wait for his Spirit to receive his ſayings from, who teacheth not only the greateſt, but the leaſt, in the new covenant; writing his law in their hearts, which law is light. And if any man hear the inward voice of wiſdom, and turn at her reproofs, ſhe will pour out her Spirit upon him, ſhe will make known her words unto him.

The ſame thing that teaches to do juſtly, and love mercy, teacheth alſo to walk humbly with the Lord. It is the ſame grace which brings ſalvation, which teacheth to live godlily, that teacheth alſo to live ſoberly and righteouſly. What I had in my former profeſſion and congregational way, the Lord brake by a mighty hand; but yet in tender mercy he was with me, preſerving me in the midſt of the ſtorms, and floods, and roarings of the enemy upon me, till his freſh viſiting of me. And he viſited me with his own Spirit, with the eternal light, life, and power thereof; and I know it to be the ſame thing which had been with me from the beginning; yea, the child, being quickened and raiſed out of the grave, preſently knew

its Father, and cannot but honour and bear teſtimony to that appearance of truth, wherewith his Father viſited him, and wherein he hath felt the renewing and reſtoring of his former work. And they that knew me formerly, before the Lord daſhed me to pieces, could and did witneſs, that the Lord had given me true humility, and my ſoul did witneſs a walking with him in the humility which he gave me. And now I witneſs from him, in this precious diſpenſation of his life and power, the very ſame humility, (and bleſſed be his name, with great increaſe) and a freſh walking with him therein, in a freſh ſenſe and meltings and bowings of ſpirit before him night and day. I do confeſs I took it to be a natural thing, and overlooked and deſpiſed it, till the Lord opened my underſtanding, and ſhewed me what it was, and how he wrought by it, and that it was a myſtery hid from all, but thoſe to whom he revealed it. And indeed I do hang daily upon the Lord in this for life and power, and am very weak without, but ſtrong as it pleaſeth the Father to manifeſt himſelf in me, and to breathe upon me through it; yea, indeed, my life, peace, reſt, hope, joy, delight, &c. is a continual gift from the Father of ſpirits, who hath manifeſted himſelf near unto me, and ſhewn me his dwelling-place. And I am ſatisfied that the Spirit of the Lord, by his immediate light, is able to reach the darkeſt heart in the darkeſt part of the world, and to turn his mind to, and give him belief in, that which ſaves, and to ſave him thereby.

The word of faith which the apoſtles preached, and the word of life eternal, and the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, differ not, but are the ſame; and the light wherewith he enlightens them, that they might believe in him who enlighteneth, is of the ſame nature with the Enlightener, and ſufficient to guide them to the faith of him. But friend, take heed of reproaching the truth. Though thou mayeſt do it ignorantly, yet it is not wholly excuſable. Haſt thou heard the preaching which thou ſpeakeſt thus ſlightly of? If thou haſt not, ſurely

ſurely thou ſhouldſt have heard and conſidered, before thou hadſt judged. Thou ſetteſt up thine own underſtanding, and a judgment according to the appearance of things to thee, inſtead of the true and righteous judgment; therein expoſing thyſelf to the righteous judgment of the Lord, who judgeth in truth and righteouſneſs, and far otherwiſe in this matter than thou doſt.

Chriſt is the pearl of price, or treaſure hid in a field. The field is the world. The word is in man's heart. And yet this myſtery was hid from ages and generations; and the kingdom which the Phariſees ſought, was within them; who were as far from any ſenſe and underſtanding of it, as the Gentiles; and ſo though it was within them, yet they were without it; they had no knowledge, no underſtanding, no ſenſe of it, had reaped no benefit by it, but were enemies and alienated in their minds from it. Ah! what palate and underſtanding is that, to which this is unſpiritual and unſavoury? But how bold and preſumptuous, do mens apprehenſions (which they take up from the letter of the ſcriptures, without the light and leading of God's Spirit) make them, even to fly in the face of that which is certainly known, witneſſed, and experienced to be of God, as well as held forth in the ſcriptures, as Col. i. 27, ſee the Greek.

As to thoſe harſh expreſſions, vilifying the truth of our God, and the converſion to him thereby; I ſhall only ſay this; well, friend, go on; reproach us and our teſtimony, and the truth of our God, as being able to lead us no further than morality, &c. we aſſuredly know and experience, and faithfully teſtify as in God's ſight, that it hath led us further into the myſtery and power of life, and into union and fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, than your doctrines ever have done or can do. For the apprehenſions of man upon ſcriptures are paſſing away, and the pure truth itſelf, which the ſcriptures teſtify of, is already revealed, and further to be revealed, and to have the glory.

Ye think we ſet up a natural light, and eſteem it ſpiritual; but we are taught of God to diſtinguiſh, underſtandingly and experimentally, between nature, and him from whom nature came; who is the word of life, the Lord God of life, beſides whom there is no Saviour; who is near to every man to warn him of, turn him and deliver him from, the devourer and oppreſſor of the ſoul. Now though the veſſels in which the light ſhines be natural, and filled with darkneſs, and become darkneſs in the darkneſs; yet the Diſcoverer, Reprover, and Checker thereof, which giveth the living ſound in the veſſel, is ſpiritual; even the Spirit of the Lord God, which ſtriveth with fallen man in the midſt of his darkneſs and captivity at ſeaſons, according to his good pleaſure. This the Shepherd of our ſouls hath taught us, opening our ears, and cauſing us to hear and know his voice, and to learn of him; who is truth, and ſpeaketh truth; who is life and Spirit, and giveth of his own eternal life and Spirit to his children.

To the Sixth.

What others have been I know not; but this I know concerning myſelf, that I was ſettled firmly in the doctrines which ye now own, and in the congregational way of worſhip, till the Lord ſmote me and brake me to pieces. With ſuch as I did converſe with (to wit, teachers, and others of eſteem in that way) profeſſed they could not conceive the ground of; but ſaid it was a prerogative caſe, and did not doubt but the iſſue thereof would be good unto me. But what if the ſheep were ſcattered, before the Shepherd came to gather them? What if they were wandering from mountain to hill, ſeeking their reſting place? What if they went mourning up and down from one watchman to another, from one ſort of people to another, inquiring after their beloved? Did this make them unfit to be pitied and viſited by the Shepherd? What ſort did Chriſt gather in the days of his fleſh? Were

Were they not deſpiſed of the wiſe, learned, ſettled ones (in their knowledge of the law and prophets)? But bleſſed be the Lord, who hath now manifeſtly revealed the foundation, and the kingdom that can never be ſhaken, and in his mercy and tender love, and by his power, fixed them thereon; that they know in whom they have believed, and how they came to believe; and have taken up the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, wherein the power is manifeſted to crucify that, which cannot otherwiſe be crucified.

The *Seventh* hath been largely ſpoken to already.

To the Eighth.

The Lord God knoweth that it is not in my heart to judge or ſet at nought any man; but in faithfulneſs to God, and in tender love to ſouls, to teſtify to others what I have ſeen in this light, as he requireth of me. And is this ſetting them at nought? It is true, they cannot believe nor receive the teſtimony in the ſtate wherein they ſtand; but that doth not diſannul or weaken it; but truth and its teſtimony ſtands, notwithſtanding their rejecting and riſing up againſt it.

To the firſt particularly. To own and contend earneſtly for the ſcriptures aright, is good; but it was not good formerly to ſet up the writings of Moſes and the prophets above and againſt Chriſt; nor is it good now to ſet up the ſcriptures above the Spirit, or to make them the trier inſtead of the anointing, John ii. 27. for the ſcriptures came from the Spirit, and they teſtify of the Spirit; and the Spirit is to be received and to dwell in the ſoul as in its temple: and here the King and Lawgiver of the church (with the balance of the ſanctuary) is indeed known. And he that receives the Spirit is to live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and in the light of the New Jeruſalem; which light is eternal, diſcovering, diſpoſſeſſing, and working out the darkneſs, and ſo taking up its place.

Now though ye may aim at having things concerning churches, and church-worſhip, regulated according to the ſcriptures; yet ye may eaſily err therein, and cannot but err therein, if your underſtandings be not opened and kept open by the Spirit; yea, ye may not wait for the Spirit's gathering and building, but may gather of yourſelves, and build of yourſelves; whereas the apoſtles were to wait for the power from on high to do their work with. And were your eyes truly opened, ye would quickly and eaſily ſee, that neither your preaching nor praying is at all like theirs. They ſpake what they received from the Spirit; ye, what ye apprehend and conceive concerning words ſpoken of by the Spirit. This is very ſhort of ſpeaking as God's oracles. And one ſort of you conceives thus, and another thus, concerning the ſcriptures, &c.

To the ſecond. Till ye know the Spirit, and come to the true waiting upon the Spirit, and underſtand his voice, ye can never recover the form of ſound words by reading the ſcriptures; but will be liable to be ſetting up your own conceivings and apprehenſions, inſtead of the truth itſelf. And till ye have the true underſtanding of the Spirit, ye cannot but alſo err concerning the power, and about your experiences of things; and ſo will be continually in great danger of being deceived, and of deceiving one another's ſouls.

To the third. Ye have a notion about Chriſt's active and paſſive obedience being imputed to the ſoul as its righteouſneſs, which the ſcriptures ſpeak not; and which manifeſts that ye do not know how the righteouſneſs is revealed, and how the Son is made of God unto them righteouſneſs, who wait upon him in the faith, and obey his goſpel. For the righteouſneſs is revealed in the faith, and is further and further made the ſoul's, in and by the faith.

To the Ninth.

God is my witneſs (whom I worſhip in ſpirit, and in whoſe fear I write and ſpeak) that I dearly love you; and in the truth and dearneſs of love, earneſtly deſire concerning you, that ye may not miſtake about Chriſt, his Spirit, his ſcriptures; about faith, love, mortification; and about the righteouſneſs, peace, and joy of the kingdom, or any other ſpiritual thing; but may know, experience, and enjoy the truth and ſubſtance of things, as they are in Jeſus. Now, if ye know, and have received, the true living faith, and witneſs the powerful, purifying virtue of it, which God hath given to overcome the world, and the wicked one with; how comes it about that there is ſuch a belief in you, that it can never do its work perfectly in this world, but only in part? Surely this belief is not of, or from, the true faith; nor to the honour of him that hath given it. For the ſpiritual weapons are mighty through God, to the pulling down of the ſtrong-holds, and bringing all (even every thought) into ſubjection to Chriſt.

To the Tenth.

That God did as much for Judas as for Peter, is not our doctrine: for God giveth more or leſs out of his rich treaſury, according to his own good pleaſure. But the unprofitable ſervant had alſo a talent given him, which he did not improve, but hid it in a napkin; and his Lord condemned him therefore. There were others had talents likewiſe, which they did improve, and their Lord accepted and juſtified them therein; ſaying, "Well done, good and faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Now is there juſt ground for any of theſe ſervants to boaſt and ſay, the other had a talent as well as I;

but I made myſelf to differ; I improved my talent, whereas he did not? The true Jew doth believe, doth obey the goſpel, and hath praiſe of God (he that hateth the light, doth not believe nor obey); and yet he ſeeth no ground of boaſting: for it was not he, of himſelf, but the grace and power of the Lord, wrought all in him. And what is done in, and by, and through the power of the Lord; the honour and glory thereof properly belongs to the Lord. Yea, he that is in the true faith, feels that which excludes boaſting, and keeps in the ſenſe of the love and mercy. Oh! that thou kneweſt a limit and check to this wiſdom, and theſe reaſonings in thee, which are not of, but againſt, the truth; as that light which thou deſpiſeſt would manifeſt to thee, if thou kneweſt the nature and virtue of it, and didſt cleave unto it. In this wiſdom and underſtanding thou mayeſt read much, and comprehend much, and be greatly taken with thine apprehenſions upon ſcriptures; but it is ſhut out of the true knowledge of them, and out of the Spirit and power of life, which they that wrote them were in, and witneſſed of.

As for free-will; we own no ſuch thing as man's free-will to do good in the fallen eſtate. But the Spirit of the Lord changeth and reneweth the will in the day of his power; and whoever he ſtriveth with, and draweth, may come in the drawing; virtue iſſuing out with the drawing from him that draweth. And this is not the condemnation, that men *cannot* come to the Son, that they might have life; but that they *do* not come; that they do not turn, at the reproof of his wiſdom, from that which he ſtands ready to turn them from.

There may be high admirations concerning God and his love, in the natural part; which we have known, and are made able in the Lord to judge of, ſince he hath taught us to diſtinguiſh of things: and this is chaffy in all ſorts of men. But there is a feeling of the pure nature of heavenly love, and a ſinking therein into the deep ſenſe thereof; and an acknowledging of

of it to God, in the humility, in the fear, in the Spirit, and in the power. Now this is indeed from the beloved, and accepted with God in the beloved. And in this his children, who are ſtripped of their own ability of admiring and loving, are taught of him to love and admire him, being gathered out of that which is natural of man, into that which is ſpiritual, and of God.

As for the Four Queries at the cloſe, which I propounded in love, and for advantage to thee; it ſeemeth to me ſtrange thou ſhouldſt ſay thou wouldſt ſpeak to the ſenſe of them, and yet ſo wave the main drift and plain ſenſe.

The Firſt was, Concerning Chriſt's being ſpiritually born of his church; to which thou haſt ſaid nothing at all, but that the firſt Chriſtians and churches were very glorious, &c. Which they alſo can own, who have denied the faith, and are not in the truth.

To the Second thou haſt anſwered as little, nor rightly according to the letter, putting in the dragon inſtead of the beaſt.

Thy Third and Fourth are alſo ſhort, and not directly to the thing; but I wrote not to contend. The Lord God ſhew thee mercy, bring down the wrong wiſdom in thee, bring thee into a capacity of knowing and receiving his pure living truth, that thou mayeſt not witneſs or fight againſt him; but, in and by his Spirit, underſtand the ſcriptures aright, and witneſs for him.

I. P.

Nineteenth of the Twelfth Month, 1667.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

THERE is a word of advice in my heart to thee, which it behoveth thee ſeriouſly and uprightly to wait on the Lord, to be made able to weigh and conſider aright; it is this. Take heed of ſetting up the letter above or againſt the Spirit (for that is not right in the ſight of God); and take heed alſo of ſetting up thine own wiſdom, conceivings, and apprehenſions above both; for that is a dangerous way of erring, and may prove a great ſnare to thy ſoul; as it hath been formerly, and is at this day to many. If ye had known what this meaneth, (ſaid Chriſt) "I will "have mercy, and not ſacrifice," ye would not have condemned the guiltleſs. We own the ſcriptures truly and ſingly, being taught of God ſo to do, and do not hold forth any thing contrary thereto, or deny any thing therein contained; but are witneſſes (living witneſſes) of the truths expreſſed and related therein; but mens meanings and conceivings thereupon (who, though they will acknowledge, that a man cannot underſtand the ſcriptures without the Spirit, yet will venture, in their own wiſdom, ſpirit, and underſtanding, to expound and give meanings) we cannot own, nor them, in ſuch their apprehenſions and practices.

That in thee, or any, which breathes after the Lord, we have unity with; but that wiſdom and comprehenſion which is above it, and a veil over it, and contrary to its nature, and which is a limit and bond to the precious ſeed, we cannot have unity with, becauſe it is of the ſame nature with that which the Lord hath condemned and deſtroyed in us, and he will not ſuffer it to live in others, where his life and power prevails.

A FEW

A FEW

EXPERIENCES

Concerning ſome of the

WEIGHTY THINGS

RELATING TO

GOD'S

EVERLASTING KINGDOM.

Given forth in true and tender Love, for the Help of any ſuch of the Race of the true Travellers as may ſtand in need thereof,

BY

ISAAC PENINGTON.

THE PREFACE.

IT hath pleaſed the Lord to unſeal and open the fountain of life in the midſt of his heritage, ſo that in his light do they ſee light, and in his life do they reap and enjoy life. And the precious promiſes are fulfilled in the midſt of them, of ſending the Comforter, and pouring out of the Holy Spirit, ſo that he that believeth, "out of his belly do flow ri-"vers of living water." Yea, the Lord hath a vine-yard, which he keepeth night and day (leſt any hurt it) and watereth every moment. Oh! the ſtreams of life, the ſtreams of love, the ſtreams of grace, the ſtreams of mercy, the ſtreams of peace, the ſtreams of joy and conſolation, which flow from him into the boſoms of his children! Indeed grace, and mercy, and peace are multiplied from God our Father, in and through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt daily, inſomuch as that ſaying of Chriſt to his diſciples (John xiv. 26, 27.) is now fulfilled, "I ſay not that I will pray the Father "for you; for the Father himſelf loveth you," &c. The Father, in his love, hath brought us to the Son; and the Son, in the ſame love, hath brought us back to the Father; and now the love flows from the Father in and through the Son, moſt naturally and abundantly. And where the heart is circumciſed, and much forgiven, there love returns back moſt truly and abundantly; ſo that the Lord our God, in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is loved with all the heart, and with all the ſoul, and nothing is thought too good to ſacrifice to him,

him, nor nothing too much to ſuffer for him. Oh! the pure love that ſprings and flows between the heavenly Father and the ſpiritual child! The beſt love that is to be found in this world (in the men of the world) is not worthy to be a ſhadow of it. God is love, and his children are of him, and partake of, and dwell in, the ſame love; though the enmity, and higheſt wiſdom of this world, know them not; as it never could know the children of the true wiſdom.

Now from this fountain do not only iſſue ſprings and ſtreams of life to refreſh our own hearts, but teſtimonies concerning the life which we feel and partake of, and concerning our travels from the dark land through the valley of tears (where he that gave us life was our well) towards our reſting-place.

Theſe alſo ſpring up in us for the ſakes of others; of which nature are the things which follow, in this little treatiſe. For not for my own ſake only did they ſpring up in me, but to ſignify to others of the mercy the Lord hath ſhewn me, and the way wherein he hath led me, and what he hath given me to taſte of and experience in the way; which will anſwer every true palate, every palate that is ſeaſoned with life, and with true experience. And having received them from the Lord for this very end, to hold them forth to others, in love and in tenderneſs of ſpirit my heart is freely given up to him therein; not aiming at any thing thereby but his glory ſingly, and the good of ſuch ſouls to whom he ſhall pleaſe to extend favour and ſhew mercy, in opening the heavenly myſtery of life and ſalvation.

I have often ſaid in my heart, *Who hath begotten me there? Who would have ſaid that Sarah ſhould have given children ſuck?* My wound was deep, and ſeemed incurable; but bleſſed be the Lord, who hath made known to me the phyſician of value, for whom no diſeaſe is too hard, but he is able to cure every ſickneſs, and to relieve and reſcue all that are captived and oppreſſed by the devil, that come unto him, and wait upon him, in the way of his righteous judgments and moſt tender

tender mercies. For after all my religion and deep exercises, and inward experiences and knowledge, I came to such a loss of what I once had, that I sensibly felt I knew not the Lord, and lay continually groaning and mourning after him, and deeply afflicted for want of him. Oh! the pure, living, and precious life, and sweet presence of my God, that my soul wanted! insomuch as my moisture was turned into the drought of summer, and my bones grown dry and withered! But at length the Lord, in his goodness, (Oh! blessed for ever be his name!) breathed upon the dry bones, and I felt life enter from him into me, and the days of deep sorrow and distress were at length forgotten, because a heavenly birth was at length conceived and brought forth. And now where is the sackcloth? Where are the ashes? Oh! there is beauty in life, instead of the ashes in the state without life; and the garment of praise, instead of the spirit of heaviness! O glory, glory, to the binder up of the bruised and broken-ones, to the Redeemer of the captives, to the repairer of the breaches, to the builder up of the wasted and desolate-ones! Glory to his tender mercy, glory to his grace, glory to his love, glory to his wisdom, glory to his power, for ever and ever. Amen.

A FEW

A FEW

EXPERIENCES, &c.

I.

A faithful Teſtimony concerning the True and Pure Way of Life; with Breathings for ſuch as have Deſires after it, and yet are Strangers to it.

THIS hath been the cry of my ſoul from my childhood, even after holineſs, after the preſence of the Lord, after union with him, after the nature and image of his Son, after a ſeparation from what was contrary to him, and a being brought forth in the power of his life.

Now bleſſed be the Lord, that is revealed which anſwers the cry; which ſo far as my ſoul comes to partake of, it is refreſhed and ſatisfied with the ſupply of that, which it thirſted and cried after.

And all that have felt the true cry, Oh! that they might alſo be taught of God, and learn aright how to wait upon him, and to walk humbly and in fear before him, that nothing might come between them and the cry of their ſouls; but they might be led by him into the enjoyment and poſſeſſion of that, which the true birth (which is born of the Spirit, and is Spirit) naturally longs after.

Now

Now truly there is no other way to life and ſatisfaction, than by believing in that power, and following that power, which raiſed Chriſt from the dead; for that is to work the work in all that are ſaved. To feel this power revealed within, to have the mind turned to this power, to follow this power in the regenerating work and path, is the way to partake of its virtue, and to experience the redemption which is thereby and therefrom.

And he that is born of the Spirit, and hath his eye opened by the Spirit, and daily exerciſed thereby; he knoweth the Spirit, and is acquainted with his ſtirrings and movings, and taught of God to diſtinguiſh them from the evil ſpirit, its ſtirrings and movings; and ſo doth not quench the Spirit of God, nor grieve it when it moves; nor give way to the other ſpirit, when it moves and allures.

Now the ſpirit of deceit allures and guides men not ſo much by outward rules, as by an inward evil nature, and by the law of ſin and death. So the Spirit of truth leads into truth, by the newneſs and power of its own life revealed in the heart, by the pure inſtinct of life within, and by the law of God written in the nature of the new creature, which is nearer than words without. For God blots out of the hearts of his what Satan had written there, and writes by the finger of his Spirit what he would have the new-birth read there; and indeed there is a kingdom of life, of righteouſneſs, of true peace, and joy (yea, of the holy power and wiſdom of the Moſt High) for his children (which are born of his Spirit, and ſpring up of the immortal ſeed) to read.

Oh! why ſhould mens eyes be cloſed, and their hearts hardened againſt the truth! Why ſhould they cry up Chriſt in words, and cry out againſt his life and power where it is revealed! Is this to kiſs the Son? Can ſuch chooſe (who are guilty of this) but periſh in the way of their ſouls travels? And how many muſt needs periſh in their reſiſting the power of truth, and precious teſtimony of God's Holy Spirit, (in this

our day) tending to their reſcue and ſalvation from that which captivates and deſtroys?

Chriſt came to deſtroy ſin, he having received power from his Father ſo to do. He knoweth it to be of a deſtroying nature, and that it will deſtroy the ſoul, where it is not by the power of life conſumed and deſtroyed in the ſoul. Oh! moſt precious to us is that viſitation of truth, light, life, and power, which ſearcheth out and diſcovereth ſin to the very root, and alſo deſtroys it! Oh! glorious is that axe of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt which is laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and is daily hewing at and cutting it down, that it might cumber the ground no more; but that the heart might become good earth, ſanctified earth, circumciſed by the Lord to bring forth good fruit, good grapes, a good increaſe of the good ſeed of life to the good huſbandman, who is worthy to reap, even in this world, the grace and mercy, love and goodneſs, wiſdom and power, &c. which he plentifully ſoweth in the ſpirits of *his* daily. Glory to his name over all for ever, who hath exalted, exalteth, and will exalt, that which the ſeveral ſorts of high profeſſors, in their wiſdom, trample upon and deſpiſe.

II.

Concerning the perfecting of God's Work in the Heart.

IS it not the will of God that his people and children ſhould be ſanctified throughout, in ſoul, in body, in ſpirit?

Is it not the will of Chriſt that his diſciples ſhould be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect?

Did he not bid them pray, "Thy kingdom come, "thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven?" And would he never have them believe and expect that it ſhould be done in earth, as it is in heaven?

Doth

Doth not he who hath the true, pure, living hope, (which anchors within the veil) purify himſelf, even as He is pure?

Is not this the way to enjoy the promiſes of God's holy preſence, (who tabernacleth in his people that are cleanſed and ſanctified) to cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in God's fear? Will God dwell in an unholy temple? Will he dwell where ſin dwells? He may indeed to ſuch, when at any time they are tender, and truly melted before him, be to them as a wayfaring man that tarries for a night; but he will not take up his abode there, walk there, ſup there, and give them to ſup with him.

Hath not Chriſt received all power both in heaven and earth from his Father? Is not this the end of receiving his power, to bring down the ſoul's enemies, and to purify and ſanctify his church, that it may be without ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing? Is he not the Captain of our ſalvation, anointed to fight the battles of the Lord? Where is the fight? Where is the ſtrong man to be found, caſt out, his goods ſpoiled, and the houſe emptied of him, and all that belongs to him? Is not Chriſt the author of faith, the finiſher of faith; and doth not he carry on the work of faith with power? And what is the work of faith? Is it not to fight with, and overcome, ſin; to be too hard for the enemy at all his weapons? Is there not a whole armour of light, life, and ſalvation prepared? What is it prepared for? Is it not that the children of light ſhould be wholly armed with it? Were there never any wholly armed with it; or can the enemy prevail on thoſe that are wholly armed with it? Are thoſe that are armed with it afraid of the enemy, his power, his ſnares, his wiles? Or are they bold in the faith, following on, in the ſpiritual battles, him who rideth before them, conquering, and to conquer.

Oh! that mens eyes were opened by the Lord! then might they ſee the glory of truth, in the pure light which ſhines from God's holy mountain; and ſuch

dark doctrines of the night (which tend to the diſhonour of Chriſt, his power, and love, and to the upholding of the enemy's kingdom) would paſs away, and prevail no more in the hearts of any that truly fear the Lord; but they would quietly wait and hope for his ſalvation, that by the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, they might be made free from the law of ſin and death, and not always be ſubject thereto! For all whom the Son maketh free, they are free indeed; and being made free by him, may ſerve God in freedom of ſpirit, without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of their lives. And then they know the power and virtue of the new covenant, and the defence which is thereby, where the wing of the Almighty overſhadows, and his ſalvation (revealed therein) is experienced for a ſufficient wall and bulwark againſt the enemy.

III.

Concerning the true Chriſt, how it may be certainly and infallibly known which is he.

WHILE people were in expectation and muſed in their hearts concerning John, whether he were the Chriſt or no, John anſwers the caſe, and tells them how they might diſcern and know the true Chriſt. It is not he that baptizeth with water, but he "that "baptizeth with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire." He "whoſe fan is in his hand," wherewith he cometh "thoroughly to purge his floor, gathering the wheat "into his garner, and burning the chaff with fire "unquenchable." Now he that knoweth him that doth this work, and experienceth him doing this work in him, doth he not know Chriſt? Oh! is it not precious to be baptized by him whom God hath appointed to baptize? Oh! the fan, the precious fan, wherewith Chriſt (who is the power and wiſdom of God) ſeparates the precious from the vile, ſevers the wheat

wheat and the chaff, gathers the wheat into the precious treaſury, and lets out the unquenchable fire upon the chaff! "Our God is a conſuming fire," ſaith the apoſtle. *To what is he a conſuming fire?* Is it not to the chaffy, earthy, droſſy nature in men and women? Why bring the chaff near to the fire, will it not burn it up? And then (as that is burnt up and conſumed) that which is pure, that which is upright, that which is tender, that which is born of God, can dwell with, and delight in, the devouring fire, and everlaſting burnings. For God is not terrible to the child which is born of him, to him who is brought forth in the image and Spirit of his Son; but to the tranſgreſſing nature, to the ſeed of evil-doers, which are naturally inclined to do evil, and every day doing evil, he is terrible for evermore. Oh! bleſſed are they who believe in that power, and experience that power near, which raiſed Chriſt from the dead, and are baptized with his baptiſm! They have acceſs to God: for ſo the true Jews have been inwardly cleanſed and kept clean; but the unclean, who have only a notion of Chriſt's blood, and of his righteouſneſs, but are not waſhed thereby, nor clothed therewith, nor ever knew what it was to put off the filthy garment, and to put on the white raiment, they may pray in their own wills and ſpirits; but they know not what it is to draw nigh to God in the Spirit and life of his Son, and ſo are yet to learn what it is to pray to the Father in the name of Chriſt. For none truly know Chriſt, but they who truly know and are led by his infallible Spirit. *They that have not the Spirit of Chriſt are none of his*; and they that have his Spirit, have that which is infallible. It is one thing to have words ſpoken concerning Chriſt, or formerly by Chriſt; another thing to have the infallible Spirit itſelf; to be infallibly born of the Spirit, and brought up in the light and life of the Spirit, that he may certainly know the Shepherd's voice from the voice of every ſtrange ſpirit.

IV.

Some QUERIES *to ſuch as affirm the Scriptures to be the only Rule, and deny the Spirit, the Seed of the Kingdom, the new Covenant, the holy Leaven of Life, the Law written in the Heart, to be the Rule of the Children of the new Covenant.*

Query 1. HOW are the ſcriptures the rule; or which of the ſcriptures are the rule? Are the whole ſcriptures the rule, from the beginning of Geneſis to the Revelations? Or are ſome parts of them the rule, ſome others not? If ſome parts of them be the rule, and ſome not, which parts are the rule, and which are not the rule? As to inſtance, in the book of Job; his friends ſpake many words concerning God, which were not ſo right as Job's, Job xlii. And alſo Job himſelf, in ſome of his words and ſpeeches, darkened counſel by words without knowledge, as he himſelf confeſſed, Job xlii. 3. Now which of Job's friends words are the rule, and which not; and which of Job's words are the rule, and which not?

Query 2. Moſes was the miniſter of the old covenant (for he miniſtered to the Jews the old covenant, which was glorious in its day); but he was not the miniſter of the new covenant. Now the new covenant, and miniſtration thereof, exceeds the old in glory. The writing of the law inwardly in the tables of the heart, is a more glorious miniſtration than the writing of it outwardly in tables of ſtone. Now were Moſes's words to the Jews under the old covenant intended by God to be the rule of the children of light under the new covenant? Shall the words of that miniſtration, which was to paſs away, be the rule of the children of that miniſtration which is to abide for ever?

Query 3. Did Moſes ſay, That when Chriſt came, my words which I ſpeak or write ſhall be your rule, or part of your rule? Or did he not rather ſay,

When

When God raiſeth up that prophet, him ſhall ye hear in all things? Is there any one that is truly a ſheep, who is not ſo made by him who gives life to the ſoul? And after he is made alive, and knows the Shepherd's voice, is he not to hear his voice for ever, who gives life eternal, and who leads into the paſtures of life, and to the pure ſtill waters, all that hear his voice and follow him? Read John xiv. 3, 4. and Acts iii. 22. and conſider.

Query 4. Was not John as great, if not greater than Moſes? Had ever any the honour beſides him to be the immediate forerunner and preparer of the way, and to point to the Lamb of God as he did? And yet was not he to decreaſe in his miniſtry, (it being not the goſpel miniſtration of the Spirit and power, as Chriſt's was) and Chriſt to increaſe in his goſpel miniſtration? Is not the leaſt in the kingdom greater than John? And are not all that are quickened by Chriſt, and follow him, led by him into the kingdom? And who can give the rule of life in the kingdom, but the King thereof? In the laſt days doth not the Lord ſpeak to his people by his Son? And is not he faithful in all his houſe, as a ſon, to give the law and rule of life to them in Chriſt?

Query 5. Are not all that are ſoldiers and ſubjects under Chriſt, to follow him, their Lord and Captain, whitherſoever he goes or rules? How can they know whither he goes or rules, but by an inward eye and ear fixed upon, and open to him? So that when once they know his Spirit, (the voice of his Spirit, as his true ſheep do) his movings, his drawings, his leadings, his going before, is their rule to follow. And they are not to grieve or quench his Spirit, in drawing back from any thing that he leads and draws them to.

Query 6. Is not Chriſt the way, the truth, the life; the living way, the living truth? Is not the living way the rule to them that live? Is not the truth itſelf the rule of all that are true? What ſhould rule and guide the ſpiritual man, that is born of the Spirit,

but the wiſdom of the Spirit, but the oracle of God manifeſted in his temple and ſanctuary? That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, in which the Spirit is to dwell; and he in whom he dwells is to be ruled by him.

Query 7. What is that which the apoſtle calls the rule, Gal. vi. 15, 16. which if a man walk according to, peace will be upon him? Is it not the Word, power, and wiſdom of God? Doth not he that walketh according to that, walk in the newneſs of the Spirit? Doth not he that walketh out of that, walk in the oldneſs of the letter at the beſt? Doth not he that believeth according to that, hopeth according to that, prayeth according to that; I ſay, doth not he believe, hope, and pray according to the rule? Doth not he that believeth, hopeth, prayeth otherwiſe, (though ever ſo zealouſly and affectionately) yet, at beſt, can any better be ſaid of it, but that it is but in the oldneſs of the letter, and ſo is not in the right way which God requires in the goſpel covenant?

Query 8. Is not the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus the law of the new covenant? And is not that the rule to the children of the new covenant? Is not the truth which makes free, the way and rule to them who are made free by it? Is the letter or Spirit the rule under the miniſtration of the Spirit? Let that which is ſenſible, and which feels and knows the truth and way of life (as it is in Jeſus) anſwer. Men may ſearch the ſcriptures, and yet not come to Chriſt for life; and men may get deſcriptions and a knowledge of things out of the ſcriptures, and yet not receive from him the rule of the new life.

V. *Con-*

V.

Concerning the Light, wherewith Chriſt the Life enlighteneth every Man.

" In him was life, and the life was the light of men. " And the light ſhineth in darkneſs, and the dark- " neſs comprehended it not." John i. 4, 5.

WHAT is the darkneſs which comprehendeth not the light? Is it not man in the unregenerate ſtate? " Ye were darkneſs," ſaith the apoſtle, ſpeaking concerning them as they had been in that ſtate.

Now it pleaſeth the Lord that in this darkneſs his pure light ſhould ſhine, to gather man out of the darkneſs. For unleſs light ſhould ſhine on man in his dark ſtate, he could never be gathered out of it; but he that is turned to the light, and followeth it, cannot abide in the darkneſs; but cometh into that which gathereth and preſerveth the mind out of it.

But of what nature is this light, which ſhineth in man in his dark ſtate? It is of a living nature; it is light which flows from life; it is light which hath life in it; it is the life of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of the Word eternal, which is the light of men. And he who cometh to the true underſtanding, may thereby diſtinguiſh it from all other lights whatſoever.

There is a vaſt difference between it and the reaſon and underſtanding of a man: for the natural man, with his underſtanding, is dead; but this is living and powerfully operating in man, as it finds entrance, and as his mind is joined to it. He that is dead, indeed, knows it not; but he that is alive unto God, feels the virtue of it. This light is above all gathered knowledge whatſoever, and above all deſcriptions of things whatſoever: for it is the thing itſelf, even of the nature of him from whom it flows. A man may get a notion from this into his mind, which he may retain the dead knowledge of, yea, his notion may quickly be

be dead in them; but he that dwells in the thing itſelf, knows that, and dwells in that which never dies.

VI.

A few Words further concerning Perfection.

WHAT was the intent of God in commending Job to Satan for a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eſchewed evil? Was it not to repreſent him as a perſon whom he could not make any breach upon, or prevail upon to ſin? Thou haſt been ranging up and down the earth, tempting many, defiling many; what ſayeſt thou to my ſervant Job, Satan, is not he perfect? Is not he upright to me in his heart, and all his ways? Canſt thou make any breach upon him?

What ſaith Satan hereto? Doth he object any ſin againſt Job? He is the accuſer of the brethren; and if he have wherewith to accuſe, he will not fail to lay it to their charge, even before the throne of God. But what hath he to ſay againſt Job? What can he object (either againſt his uprightneſs, or againſt his perfection) to the Lord? Oh! ſays he, thou haſt ſet an hedge about him. He ſerves thee indeed perfectly and uprightly; I confeſs I have nothing to lay to his charge: but doth he ſerve thee for nought? But take away thy hedge, ſuffer me to winnow him, and thou ſhalt quickly ſee I ſhall have ſomewhat to lay to his charge, and that no ſmall matter neither: for do but take away thy bleſſing from him, wherewith thou haſt ſo abundantly bleſſed him, and he will ſoon curſe thee to thy face.

Well, the Lord giveth him leave to try if he can ſtain Job's uprightneſs and perfection: and now begins the trial, whether the devil's temptations ſhall bring him to ſin, or the fear of the Lord prevail to preſerve him from ſin.

Firſt,

Firſt, The devil hath power to touch all he hath; which he ſoon doth.

What doth this produce? Doth he ſin againſt the Lord, doth he murmur, doth he blaſpheme, as the devil had ſaid? No; he fell on the ground and worſhipped, acknowledging all to be the Lord's, and bleſſing his name. So that, in all this ſore affliction, he ſinned not, nor charged God fooliſhly, Job i. 20, 21, 22.

But the commendation which God had given him, of being a perfect and upright man, fearing God, and eſchewing evil, ſtill remains and ſtands good againſt Satan, chap. ii. iii.

Satan gets leave to try him yet further, inſinuating againſt him, that if he may have liberty to ſmite his body, he ſhall eaſily prevail upon him to ſin; not being able at preſent to bring in any plea againſt his perfection and uprightneſs, againſt his fearing God and eſchewing evil. But this hath the ſame ſucceſs with the former; for he could not bring Job to ſin with his lips, ver. 10.

Now mind, Can any man, that hath his heart made upright by the Lord, keep that integrity, and ſin? Is not every ſin a departing from the purity, from the integrity? Was not every tranſgreſſion againſt the firſt covenant, out of the firſt covenant, even a departing from the limits of it? Is not every tranſgreſſion of the ſecond covenant a departing out of the limits of the ſecond covenant? He that abideth in Chriſt, doth he ſin? Can he ſin? Doth not he that ſins depart out of his light, out of his life, out of his power, into the darkneſs, into the death, into the temptation of the enemy? Is it not promiſed, I will put my fear in their hearts, and they ſhall not depart from me: while the fear which God puts into the heart abides there, can that man ſin? Doth not the pure fear cleanſe the heart, and keep it clean, that the conſcience may be void of offence, both towards God and man? Is the conſcience void of offence, where ſin is committed either againſt God or man? When the blood flows in the

the pure light, doth it not waſh? Doth it not waſh clean? Doth it not make whiter than the ſnow? When ſin is entered into afterwards, and committed again, doth it not defile? Oh! read in the true ſenſe, in the true experience, with the true underſtanding, which God gives.

VII.

Concerning Imputation of Righteouſneſs.

THE ſcripture ſaith, that Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteouſneſs; and that ſo it ſhall be alſo to all that believe as he did, even in the ſame power which he believed in, Rom. iv. 23, 24.

Now thus we witneſs the thing: our minds being turned from ſin, and turned to the pure gift of God, that works a change in us. Herein we feel faith ſpring up, which faſtens our ſpirits to the power of life; and then we feel that (in the power of life) flow upon our ſpirits, which waſheth away our ſin; and all that is done in this holy and righteous faith, is of the holy, righteous life and power, and accepted with the Lord; and that which condemns ſin in us, never condemns any work which is wrought in God, but juſtifies it. So that the root of ſin, with all that flows from it, is condemned by the righteous principle of life; but the root of holineſs, with all that flows from it, is juſtified. And this is our righteouſneſs, even Chriſt the holy power of life, who condemns and caſts out ſin: and it is great joy to any of us to feel the root of ſin ſtruck at, and condemned by his power, and him caſting ſin out of us, and the root of righteouſneſs growing up in us, and bearing us, and cauſing us to bring forth fruit to God. And here we ſenſibly find we have right to the ſcriptures, to the promiſes, to all that Chriſt did and ſuffered for us, and witneſs the propitiation by and through him, and

bleſs

bleſs God for all the diſpenſations of life, wherein he hath appeared to the children of men in any age, which were all glorious and excellent in their ſeaſon; but the diſpenſation of the Spirit is the ſtanding diſpenſation, which excels in glory, which Chriſt, in the days of his fleſh, pointed his diſciples to wait for, which his going away was to make way for. This diſpenſation was revealed and ſet up before the apoſtaſy from the life and Spirit of the apoſtles, and is again revealed and ſet up in power and great glory, after the long night of apoſtaſy; bleſſed be the name of the Lord for ever. For the darkneſs is already paſſed away from many ſpirits, and the true light again ſhineth. Glory in the higheſt to the God of life and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

VIII.

Some QUERIES *concerning the Time and Work of Reformation.*

Query 1. WHAT did the time of *Reformation* and *Subſtance* (ſpoken of Heb. ix. 10.) ſignify and point at in relation to the myſtery? Was it not for the bringing in of the goſpel; the day of Chriſt's Spirit and power; the day of his inward renewing and reforming; the day of his taking his fan into his hand, to purge his floor; the laying his axe to the root of the corrupt tree, that he may deſtroy the works of the devil in mens hearts, caſting down and plucking up what his heavenly Father hath not planted there? When he cometh as a refiner's fire, and fuller's ſoap, to purify the ſons of Levi, as gold and ſilver is purged, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteouſneſs; is not this the time of reformation?

Query 2. Who is the reformer? Is it not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Doth not he create anew? Doth not he blot out the old image, and form into a new lump? For

For if any man be in Chriſt, there is a renewing there; a new building there; yea, old things are paſſed away there; there is nothing in him but what is new. He is faithful (in all his houſe) inwardly to judge, condemn, crucify, ſubdue, deſtroy whatſoever is contrary to the nature and Spirit of his Father, and to form and build up the ſpirits of his in that which is new and pure.

Query 3. How, or by what, doth Chriſt reform? Is it not by his Spirit and power, by the light thereof, by the life thereof, by the virtue thereof? For nothing can change and reform the heart, but that which is more powerful than him who corrupteth it.

Query 4. Where doth Chriſt reform and new-create? Is it not in the new covenant; in the faith and obedience thereof? Doth he not, by the laws thereof, break and diſannul the laws of the old covenant, and make void the covenant of hell and death; and ſo make an everlaſting covenant of life and peace; even an holy, pure, living agreement, between God his Father and the ſouls of his? Thus by his light he overcomes darkneſs; by his life he overcomes death; by his pure nature and Spirit he overcomes (chains down, ſubdues, and deſtroys) that which is impure, breaking the bond of ſin and iniquity, and letting the oppreſſed go free from under it. Thus he manifeſts himſelf to be the Saviour by his holy anointing, breaking the yoke of the oppreſſor, Iſai. x. 27.

Query 5. Whom doth Chriſt reform? Are they not thoſe who take his yoke upon them, and learn of him? Are they not thoſe who are turned to the light of his Spirit, inwardly made manifeſt; turned from the darkneſs, walking no more therein, but in his pure light? They that own his inward appearance in their hearts, and turn (from the enmity there) to him, receiving his light, his law, his life, his Spirit, them doth he exerciſe daily, and is daily reforming their hearts and ways thereby. But if any man receiveth not his light, his life, his Spirit, within, ſuch an one is none of his; and he may reform himſelf as much as he can, but he knoweth not yet the day of the true reformation.

Query

Query 6. How are they to walk whom Chriſt has begun to reform? Is it not in that light, in that Spirit, in that covenant, in that grace, wherein and whereby he hath in ſome meaſure reformed them? Is it not in the newneſs of the Spirit, and in the newneſs of the law thereof? Here Chriſt walked before the Father in all well-pleaſing, ("Lo, I come; I delight to do thy "will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart," ſaid he, Pſal. xl. 7, 8.) and here all his are alſo to walk, 1 John ii. 6. For indeed there is no pleaſing the Father, or Chriſt our Lord and Maſter, out of the virtue, life, and newneſs of his own Spirit.

Query 7. What was the glory that was to follow the ſufferings of Chriſt, ſpoken of 1 Pet. i. 11? Was it not the glory of his inward reformation in the hearts of the children of the new covenant? Doth not Chriſt give of his grace in the goſpel? And doth not his grace make a glorious change? Doth not he give of his Spirit to his children? And doth not his Spirit change from ſin, from ſhame, into holineſs, into true beauty, into the heavenly glory, and ſo from glory to glory, tranſlating more and more into the glory? Doth not Chriſt appear glorioufly in the hearts of his, and in the aſſemblies of his, who meet together in his name, and wait upon him in that which is pure and living of him? And is there not a covering, or defence of the wing of the Almighty, upon the glory? Iſa. iv. 5.

Query 8. Was not this glory brought forth in the days of the apoſtles? Was not great grace then upon them all? (I mean ſuch as received and held the truth in the love of it). Did they not witneſs the peace which paſſeth man's underſtanding? Had they not received the holy and ſpiritual underſtanding from him that is true; and were they not in him that is true? Did they not know victory and dominion over ſin and death? Did not the little babes witneſs pardon of ſin, and know him who preſerveth from ſin? Had not the young men overcome the wicked-one; and were not the

the elders ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might? Were they not come to the ſpiritual Sion, and heavenly Jeruſalem; and did they not walk in the light of the Lamb, and of the holy city, before God the Judge of all? There is no man, in theſe our days, can ſo much as conceive the glory of that ſtate, but he that hath taſted of a meaſure thereof.

Query 9. Was not this glory eclipſed, and did not a great darkneſs come over it, hiding it from the ſons of men, ſo that (for ages and generations) they knew not the true Spirit, the true light, the true life, the everlaſting covenant, the holy goſpel, the true church, the man-child, &c. but theſe, with many other heavenly myſteries, have been hid from their eyes.

Query 10. What hath got up ſince theſe have been hid? Have not the ſhadows of the night took place, and overſpread the Chriſtian ſtate, inſtead of the light of the day? Hath not antichriſt got up, and a falſe church appeared; that which hath been tender, and begotten of God, ſnibbed, bowed down, curbed, and perſecuted, and falſe devotion and worſhip ſet up inſtead of the true?

Query 11. Muſt not antichriſt be deſtroyed, the falſe church judged, the true church come out of the wilderneſs into which ſhe fled, the man-child appear again, conquering and to conquer all which hath riſen up from the ſpirit of darkneſs ſince the firſt breaking forth of the goſpel? And is not the goſpel to be preached again to them that dwell on earth; even to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people? Rev. xiv. 6.

Now who is wiſe to underſtand the appearance of the Lord, and the beginning of theſe things, which is in a way contrary to man's wiſdom? and ſo he that will diſcern them, muſt come out from following of the man's own ſpirit, nature, and wiſdom in himſelf, into the ſenſe and leadings of him who giveth the true eye-ſight. The appearance of the Lord is inward and ſpiritual, and he muſt have an inward and ſpiritual eye who diſcerneth it. It was ſaid of old, by mockers and

and ſcoffers, Where is the promiſe of his coming? For all things continue as they were from the beginning. The ſame ſpirit will ſay ſo ſtill; and yet, to that eye which the Lord hath opened, he is already come inwardly, ſpiritually, in his own pure eternal life and power; and the precious effects of his coming are made manifeſt in many hearts; bleſſed be his name. Yea, he is further to appear in glory and pure brightneſs; and ſo we wait further for his appearance, both in our own hearts, and in the hearts of the children of men. We have met with our beloved; our God, whom we waited for, hath appeared. The Sun of righteouſneſs hath ariſen, with healing under his wings, and we have felt virtue and healing from him, and cannot but rejoice and teſtify of his ſalvation.

And what further manifeſtations of himſelf he hath yet to give forth, we are ſure to partake of, being formed by him in Spirit, and found in that wherein he appears, and from whence his glory ſhines. Oh! that all that love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in any meaſure of ſincerity, did know the way of the goſpel, which is in the Spirit, light, life, and power, which is eternal, even in the grace and truth which is in him! And his kingdom, which is ſpiritual, and not of this world, cannot be ſhaken by this world (nor his Mount Sion removed); but is able to ſhake all nations and kingdoms which kiſs not the Son, but oppoſe him. Bleſſed are they who are turned to the light of his Spirit, and who therein kiſs and obey him.

IX.

Some QUERIES *concerning the Spirit of Chriſt, or the Spirit of the Father, (it being one and the ſame Spirit) for thoſe who take themſelves to be Chriſtians (and under the Goſpel Diſpenſation) to conſider and examine themſelves by, that they may not be deceived, either concerning their preſent Eſtate here, or the eternal Eſtate of their Souls hereafter; ſeeing the Apoſtle ſo expreſsly ſaith, "If any Man hath not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his," Rom. viii.*

Query 1. DOST thou know the Holy Spirit of the Father? Thou mayeſt have read ſomewhat concerning it, and have apprehenſions in thy mind about it; but doſt thou truly know what it is by its inward appearances and operations in thine own heart?

Query 2. Haſt thou received God's Holy Spirit into thy heart? Haſt thou let in Chriſt's Spirit, when he hath knocked at the door of thy heart, and received him? For he that is a true child, moſt naturally breatheth and crieth for the Father's Spirit; and the Father alſo moſt naturally giveth his Spirit to them that truly and rightly aſk it of him, Luke xi. 13. and thou muſt thankfully receive the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, when the Father gives him.

Query 3. Doth the Spirit of Chriſt dwell in thee? Hath the ſtronger man caſt the ſtrong man out of thee, and taken poſſeſſion of thy heart, and doth he dwell therein? Then thou mayeſt truly ſay, that thou art built up by God an habitation for him in the Spirit. Then thou art waſhed and cleanſed by him from thy filthineſs; and luſts or vain thoughts do not lodge in thee. For the Holy Spirit of Chriſt will not dwell where ſuch things lodge; but come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and be a father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord

Lord Almighty, in whom I will dwell and walk, 2 Cor. vi. 15, 16, 17.

Query 4. Doth God's Spirit lead thee into all truth that thou needeſt know and walk in? Art thou a true child, depending upon, and guided by, the Spirit of the Father? Canſt thou not ſee thy way, but as he maketh it known to thee? Art thou a follower of the ſpotleſs Lamb, in the ſame Spirit wherein he walked? If it be thus with thee, then art thou a child of God indeed.

Query 5. Doſt thou live in the Spirit? Doſt thou feel the Spirit of God to be a fountain of life, from whence life ſprings up into thee daily? Doſt thou witneſs that ſcripture fulfilled in thee, "He that believeth on me," as the ſcripture hath ſaid, "out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water?" Haſt thou received the living water from Chriſt? And is that living water become a well of life in thee?

Query 6. Doſt thou walk in the Spirit, in the life thereof, in the newneſs thereof ſpringing up in thy heart? Doſt thou know the difference between walking in the oldneſs of the letter, and in the newneſs of the Spirit?

Query 7. Didſt thou ever learn of the Father, to know Chriſt? And didſt thou ever learn of Chriſt, to know the Father? And hath the Father indeed revealed the Son to thee, and the Son indeed revealed the Father to thee? Or art thou yet only in the dead and dry notions, or barren comprehenſions about theſe things?

Query 8. Doſt thou know how the letter killeth, and how the Spirit quickeneth and maketh alive? And art thou made alive by the Spirit, and born of the heavenly water and Spirit, and ſo become ſpiritual as the ſcripture teſtifieth? "That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit."

Query 9. Art thou come under the miniſtration of the Spirit? Doſt thou know what the miniſtration of the Spirit is? Or doſt thou only know what the letter

faith concerning the miniſtration of the Spirit, but art altogether ignorant of the miniſtration itſelf?

Query 10. Doſt thou know what the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus means? Haſt thou ever received this law; the law of the new covenant; the holy law of life written on thy heart by the finger of God's Spirit? For the ſame Spirit that wrote the law of the letter in tables of ſtone, writeth the law of the Spirit in the fleſhly tables of the heart.

Query 11. Doſt thou not grieve the Holy Spirit, nor quench it, nor deſpiſe the propheſyings thereof in thine own heart? For Chriſt is a king, a prieſt, a prophet; and he miniſters in his ſanctuary, in his temple, (which the holy renewed heart is) in and by his Spirit.

Query 12. Doſt thou know what the anointing is? Art thou anointed therewith? And doth thy whole ability lie therein, inſomuch as that thou art daily ſenſible thou canſt not do any thing of thyſelf, but ſtill findeſt God working in thee, both to will and to do that which is right in his eyes, of his own good pleaſure?

Query 13. Did thy religion begin in the Spirit? In the living miniſtration of the new covenant? Did thy knowledge begin ſo; to wit, in feeling God opening thy heart by his Spirit, and giving thee the underſtanding whereby thou mighteſt know him? Did thy faith begin in his power, and doth it ſtand in the ſame power to this day? Oh! that men were ſenſible what is the right religion, and of the inward appearance of God's holy arm and power, which alone can redeem, and ſave the ſoul out of the hands of its enemies?

Query 14. Doth thy worſhip ſtand in the Spirit, and inward life of truth in thy heart? Art thou ſuch a worſhipper as the Father hath ſought out and made ſo? Or art thou a worſhipper of thine own or other mens making? And doſt thou keep within the limits of the living and ſpiritual worſhip, and not tranſgreſs the law thereof?

Oh!

Oh! who would be miſtaken and deceived about ſuch weighty things as theſe, of ſo great neceſſity and concern? Who would miſs of God's Spirit, and of the law and covenant of life in Chriſt Jeſus, and be only in a dream concerning theſe things, without the true, demonſtrative knowledge, poſſeſſion, and enjoyment of them?

X.

Of the true Way, (the Way of Holineſs, the Way of Life) and of the true Teaching and Knowledge.

CHRIST is the way, the only way to the Father; there is not another. Now every one that will truly know Chriſt, and come to Chriſt, muſt learn of the Father. It is written in the prophets, "All thy "children ſhall be taught of the Lord; every one "therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, "cometh unto me," ſaid Chriſt. Here are two things neceſſary for every one that would come to Chriſt. One is hearing of the Father; the other is learning what he teacheth. For though a man do hear the living voice of the Father, yet if he do not learn and keep the inſtruction of life received from him, he may be drawn aſide before he come to the Son. But he whoſe ears are opened to hear the voice, and who feels the inſtruction of life from the Father, to go to him in whom he hath placed life; here the Spirit of the Father ſecretly draws in the inwards of a man's mind and ſpirit, from that which is really dead, to that which is truly living.

Now, when a man is come to the Son, in whom the Father hath placed the fulneſs of life, then he ſhall witneſs him the way to the Father, and he will teach him daily of the Father. And here is the ſtate of true ſubjection to the Son experienced, whom the ſoul muſt hear (and of whom he is to learn) in all things; who diſcovers the inward darkneſs in man's mind, and

breaks down that in him which is contrary to God, having a daily croſs ready for that which is to be crucified in him, whereby he ſhall die daily to himſelf. And as he dies to himſelf, Chriſt will reveal himſelf more and more in him, and he ſhall feel the pure ſeed of life ſpringing more and more up in him, and living in him, and he in it; in and through which he ſhall come more and more into union and fellowſhip with the Father of ſpirits, and the whole living body of his church and people.

But now, to learn of the Father to come to the Son, and to learn of the Son to know the Father, and to walk in the newneſs of Spirit before him, (and not in an old dead knowledge and fleſhly underſtanding) theſe are great myſteries, which none can learn by a literal conception and comprehenſion of things, but as they are quickened, and their minds and underſtandings opened and kept open by the Lord. Therefore this is the great ſkill and true wiſdom, to know the Shepherd and his voice; and his manner of appearing, and to what he appears; which is to his own ſheep, to the true birth. And his way and manner of appearing to that birth, is by viſiting and reaching to it by his power opening it, thereby giving it to ſee, hear, and underſtand; but ſhutting up himſelf from the contrary nature, wiſdom, and ſpirit in all men.

There is ſomewhat which maketh a fair ſhew in the fleſhly part, as if it were of God; but God knoweth what and who are his. Now it is for the true children, that the milk of the word, and the bread of life is; and them the Lord is ſtill gracious to, and heareth all the deſires and breathings of their hearts; them he preſerveth and viſiteth in Egypt, and alſo bringeth out thence. Them he leadeth through the wilderneſs, dividing the Red-Sea before them; before them alſo he divideth Jordan, (the river of judgment) cauſing them to paſs through it alſo, that they may enter into the holy land. And their lot he defendeth in the holy land, in their ſubjection to the Spirit and law of life which rules there. But the contrary birth falleth ſhort by

by the way, and cannot enter into, nor abide in, that which is pure and living of God.

Now in the lowly ſeed the whole myſtery of life is learned, by thoſe that come thither, and wait there, growing up into him who is the Head; but no leſſon of life, and of the truth as it is in Jeſus, is learned out of it. Oh! how careful had men need be to know this ſeed in themſelves, and to witneſs its daily ſpringing up and growth in them.

XI.

Concerning Separation from the Spirit and Ways of the World.

THERE is a neceſſity of ſeparation from the ſpirit, ways, and worſhips of the world, by thoſe that will be the Lord's people. The Jews outward were to be a ſeparated people from all other people (from their gods, from their worſhips) if they would enjoy the favour of the Lord, and the bleſſings of the good land. God had ſeparated them from all other nations, and they were not to mingle with them; neither in their worſhip, nor marriages, &c. So the Jews inward, who are God's gathering of ſpiritual worſhippers, out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, are to be a ſeparated and holy people to the Lord. For when God caſt off the Jews, he ſought out worſhippers in their ſtead, even for a ſpiritual nation and holy people of inward Jews, inſtead of that outward people, outward place of worſhip, and outward land, which he caſt off. Now thoſe whom God ſeeks to be the new, inward, and ſpiritual worſhippers, (inſtead of the literal and outward) muſt come out of all other ways and gatherings, upon the many mountains, to the mountain of the Lord's houſe, and to the place of his gathering: the command is expreſs, "Come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate; "and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive

" you," &c. 2 Cor. vi. It is true, I ſeek you for worſhippers, and I call you to the goſpel-feaſt of fat things, and I will receive you if ye come; but ye muſt firſt come out from among all the falſe ways and falſe worſhippers, and depart from (and not ſo much as touch) that which is unclean, (the unclean ſpirit, his unclean ways and worſhippers) and then I will receive you, and own you as my ſons and daughters, and be a Father to you; not elſe. Mark now; The Jews outward (in their day) muſt be ſeparate from all the Heathen outward, if they would be judged and owned by God for true worſhippers according to the law. The primitive Chriſtians were to ſeparate from both Heathen and Jews too (even their temple, prieſts, and ordinances, which were once of God) if they would be worſhippers, true worſhippers under the goſpel, worſhippers of God's ſeeking. And the Chriſtians, after the antichriſtian corruption and darkneſs, muſt come out of Babylon; that is, out of all forms of religion, and buildings out of the life and power, (for that is Babylon, the city of confuſion, which is built, ſtands out of, and practiſeth out of, the order and unity of the Spirit) if they will be found worſhippers in the day of reſtoration; after the long darkneſs of the apoſtaſy, they muſt not worſhip the beaſt, (nor worſhip God, as the beaſt teacheth and requireth; for in ſo worſhipping, God is not worſhipped, but the beaſt) nor bear his name, nor receive his mark, either on their forehead or right hand, nor be of the number of his name. Now the command is as expreſs to come of Babylon; that is, to ſeparate from all antichriſtian ways and worſhips; as ever it was to ſeparate from the Heathen and Jews; and there is no being a true worſhipper in God's ſight, but in the true way of ſeparation from all falſe worſhippers, who worſhip in forms and appearances of godlineſs, out of the life and power.

Now, oh! how precious is it to feel God's ſeeking, God's gathering, God's ſeparating, God's teaching, leading, drawing into the truth, and true way of worſhip!

ſhip! For there are ſelf-ſeparations, which are out of the true Spirit, life and power. Yea, God may begin the ſeparation, and another wiſdom may ſtep in, and carry it on, out of the limits of the ſweet, innocent Spirit, life and power. Oh! bleſſed is he who is ſeparated by the Lord from all that is not of him! But he that is but ſenſual, and hath not the Spirit, but only by a literal knowledge ſeparateth himſelf, he differeth from others but in the outward form and appearance of godlineſs; but is in one nature and ground with thoſe whom he ſeparateth from. Thus the Papiſts, and all pretended Chriſtians, (of the ſame Spirit) who feel not the true Spirit, power, and life, are but one in the ground, how great ſoever their difference outwardly ſeem. And thoſe that ſeparate further and further, (even to the utmoſt extent outwardly, or in way of appearance) being not ſeparated by the Lord from that nature and ſpirit wherein the enmity lodgeth, they are ſtill inhabitants of one and the ſame city, (for the city of Babylon is very large) and daughters of one and the ſame mother, even of the wiſdom which is from beneath; which wiſdom, in its higheſt exaltation, is far beneath the nature and true excellency of the pure and heavenly wiſdom, even in its loweſt and moſt contemptible appearance. Oh! bleſſed is the religion, the worſhip, the ſeparation, the fear of the Moſt High God, the faith, the knowledge, which begins in the Spirit and power, (even in the evidence and demonſtration of God's own Spirit) and which ſtands and abides therein! For herein are the children of light diſtinguiſhed, and kept diſtinct (by God Almighty, who hath made the difference) from all the children of darkneſs.

By ISAAC PENINGTON,

1671, About the 12th month. Priſoner for the teſtimony of truth at Reading gaol.

A TREA-

A

TREATISE

CONCERNING

GOD's TEACHINGS,

AND

CHRIST's LAW,

With ſome other THINGS of

WEIGHTY IMPORTANCE

Particularly mentioned after the PREFACE.

Written by

ISAAC PENINGTON.

Priſoner at READING-GAOL for the Teſtimony of Truth.

" They alſo that erred in Spirit ſhall know Underſtanding, and " they that murmured ſhall learn Doctrine." Iſa. xxix. 24. Bleſſed be the LORD, it is ſo. This Prophecy is ſenſibly and experimentally fulfilled, and fulfilling daily more and more.

THE

PREFACE.

CHRIST, who came from the Father, and knew the way of truth and life everlaſting, and was to guide men to the Father, being the only way unto him, preached the kingdom, and bid men ſeek the kingdom; teaching and inſtructing them in many parables concerning it, and directing them where and how to find it.

The apoſtles likewiſe (who ſucceeded Chriſt in the ſame Spirit and power wherein he miniſtered) preached the ſame kingdom, declaring and deſcribing what it was, and wherein it conſiſted; namely, not in word, but in power (even in the power which ſhakes all that is to be ſhaken, but cannot be ſhaken itſelf, nor the kingdom which is in it, 1 Cor. iii. 20. and Heb. xii. 28.) Nor was the kingdom of God meat and drink (or any outward thing); but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, Rom. xiv. 17.

And they preached not in vain; for the life was inwardly revealed in many, the power inwardly revealed, and the righteouſneſs, peace, and joy thereof felt. For ſuch as truly believed and obeyed the goſpel, received the kingdom which could never be ſhaken, and had an entrance miniſtered to them thereinto, according to their diligence and carefulneſs in the truth.

Now afterwards a great darkneſs came over, and this glorious kingdom was again veiled, and the kingdom of darkneſs and deceit overſpread the profeſſors of Chriſtianity; and in this time notions and outward know-

knowledges took with men, inſtead of the life and truth itſelf, wherein the kingdom and power ſtands.

But, bleſſed be the Lord, the light of life again ſhines out of and over the darkneſs, and the kingdom is again received, and the entrance into it again known; and what is ſeen and heard (and in meaſure enjoyed and poſſeſſed) is a faithful teſtimony given forth. And bleſſed are they who hear the joyful ſound; for it is no leſs than the ſound of life itſelf, the power itſelf, the goſpel itſelf, the Spirit himſelf, manifeſting himſelf in, and ſpeaking through, veſſels according to his pleaſure.

Now they that receive this light, which is teſtified of, and witneſſed to, receive Chriſt; but they that deſpiſe and reject it, reject him; as will be made manifeſt in the day of the Lord, whatever men, in their wiſdom and comprehenſions, judge to the contrary, who know not, nor are able to judge of the appearances of the Lord, or of the glory of this diſpenſation.

For this diſpenſation is indeed moſt precious, glorious, and living, being a diſpenſation of the ſeed and power of life itſelf, whereby God tranſlateth out of darkneſs, and the regions thereof, into the kingdom of his dear Son, and into his glorious image. Which, reader, not that thou mayeſt have only notions concerning, but mayeſt really come to partake of, is the end of my giving forth theſe things following; which ſweetly, freſhly, livingly, and powerfully ſprang up in my heart for thy ſake, and are in great love preſented to thy view,

By a ſufferer for the truth which lives in him, and in which he lives, through the tender mercy of the Lord, and to the glory of the riches of his grace,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

A TREA-

A

TREATISE

CONCERNING

God's Teachings, and Christ's Law, &c.

I.

Concerning God's Teachings.

" It is written in the prophets" (ſaid Chriſt) " they " ſhall be all taught of God. Every one therefore " that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, " cometh unto me," John vi. 45. " For the pro- " phets indeed had ſaid, All thy children ſhall be " taught of the Lord, and they ſhall all know me, " from the leaſt of them to the greateſt of them."

NOW whoſe children are they which ſhall all be taught of the Lord? And which are they which ſhall all know the Lord by the teachings of his Spirit, from the leaſt to the greateſt? Are they not the children of the free woman, the children of the Jeruſalem which is from above, which is the mother of all that are truly living? Now all her children the Father of life begets, and taketh care to teach them the true, pure, heavenly, living knowledge; ſo that they indeed know the Lord, being taught by the anointing ſo to do; and they indeed know Chriſt, the Father revealing him to them: for none knows the Father but the Son, and

and none knows the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Father reveals him. "Fleſh and blood "hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which "is in heaven" (ſaid Chriſt to Peter, Matt. xvi. 17.) And it pleaſed God to reveal his Son in me, ſaid Paul, Gal. i. 15, 16. And how did Paul preach Chriſt among the Gentiles? Did he not preach him as a myſtery hid from ages and generations, which none but the Father could reveal and make manifeſt? And when he is known and made manifeſt, is he not known within, revealed within, made manifeſt within? Col. i. 26, 27. and 1 John i. 2. Mark: "The life was "manifeſted." Thus they came to know Chriſt; and if they would bring others to the knowledge of Chriſt, they muſt bring others to the manifeſtation of the ſame life, and ſhew unto them that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifeſted unto them, ver. 2. Now that they might do thus, they were to preach the light to them (even this meſſage, that God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all, ver. 5.) and to turn them to the light (Acts xxvi. 18.) in which alone men can ſee and receive the life which is eternal. Men may know or comprehend many things concerning the Meſſiah from the letter; but they can only know the Meſſiah himſelf in the light which ſhines into their hearts, and which he ſent his apoſtles to direct and turn their minds to. For they directed them to the Word within, light within, life within, Spirit within; to feel after the manifeſtation of God within, which was communicated to the very Gentiles, Rom. i. 17. And ſo Paul directed the Gentiles to ſeek after and find God nigh, and not afar off, Acts xvii. 27. Oh! this is precious to find and feel God near, Chriſt near; in his light to ſee light, in his life to feel and enjoy life! For here (in the place of darkneſs, in the place of ſin and death, in the place where dragons lay, Iſa. xxxv. 7.) is the redeeming power to be felt, and the deliverance of the ſoul experienced by thoſe that truly believe.

The

The Scribes and Pharisees had a knowledge that the Messiah was to come; but how came they by it? Why they had read so in the letter of the scriptures. The professors of this age have a knowledge that Christ is come; how came they by that? Why they have read so in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. But who hath believed the report of life now, and to whom is the arm of the Lord (which is now stretched forth) revealed? Who hath heard and learned of the Father to know the Son, and so to come to him, even from the inward revelation of his Spirit, and from the inward living knowledge which is thereby? *Every one therefore* (saith Christ) every one of these children, every one that is taught of God (because of what they have heard and learned of the Father) cometh to the Son. Now every one that is thus drawn, and thus cometh, Christ receiveth, and giveth to all such eternal life; and they know him who giveth them eternal life, and who preserveth and maintaineth life in them. Others have but a notional knowledge of him; but do not indeed know him that is true, nor are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ, who is the very God and life eternal, 1 John v. 20.

And so they that are taught of God, learn of him to repent from dead works, and do repent them thereof; whereas others, through hardness of heart, do not so much as discern which are dead works, which not, in matters of worship. Others do not know the true difference between that which is dead, and that which is living; but death (unknown to them) lives and reigns in their very knowledge and apprehensions of things; even in their faith, in their duties, yea, in all they believe and perform to God. For as Paul was alive without the law once, even when he walked according to the letter of the law blameless; so all sorts are now dead, in the midst of all their knowledges and practices from the letter (how much alive soever they may seem to themselves therein) till they come to the ministration of the Spirit. "For the "letter killeth; but the Spirit quickeneth, or giveth

" life," 2 Cor. iii. 6. and ver. 3. This therefore is the work of a true miniſter, to beget into the Spirit, and into the life; but ah! how little do men know what dead works are, and what it is truly to witneſs repentance from them! Men out of God's Spirit, light, and power, are ſo far from repenting for them, that they do not ſo much as rightly diſtinguiſh and diſcern them; but take that for living which is dead; kindling a fire of themſelves, and compaſſing themſelves about with ſparks, thinking the warmth thereof to be the true warmth. Now if men are not come to the true repentance from dead works, much leſs are they come to the true faith towards God; and ſo are yet in their ſins, yet out of Chriſt, having never learned of the Father to come to him; and ſo are ſtill in Egypt's ſpirit, in Egypt's wiſdom, and in that hold their religion: and whenever God appears in his Spirit and power, he will not be that to them which they expect; but a dreadful ſtroke from him will come upon all their ways and worſhips, which are as abominable to God, as they are pleaſing to them. But alas! to what end are words to that ear, to that ſpirit, which is like the deaf adder, which will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he ever ſo wiſely! Could the letter-learned Scribes and Phariſees hear the voice of Chriſt in the days of his fleſh? Nay; they could not, in that gain-ſaying ſpirit. Can the letter-learned profeſſors, in the ſame ſpirit, hear the voice of Chriſt's Spirit now? Nay; they cannot. And they that cannot hear the voice of the ſecond Adam, the voice of the quickening Spirit, the voice of him who gives life to the ſoul, how can they live? And if they firſt receive not life from Chriſt, how can they perform any living action to God? How can they worſhip in the Spirit and in the living truth, who are not gathered into the Spirit and into the living truth? Oh! that men could conſider aright of theſe things, and wait on the Lord for the true underſtanding of them! For without the true knowledge of God and Chriſt (without that knowledge which is life eternal) men

men muſt needs periſh. It cannot be otherwiſe; for the true knowledge only ſaves, and therefore they which have it not muſt needs periſh.

II.

Concerning the Law of Chriſt.

"And the iſles ſhall wait for his law," Iſa. xlii.4.

WHAT is that law which the iſles were and are to wait for? Is it not the grace and truth which comes by Jeſus Chriſt, even the grace in the inward parts, the truth in the inward parts? The law outward was given by Moſes to the outward Jews; but grace and truth comes by Jeſus Chriſt. That is the law of the Jew inward, which the iſles of the Gentiles were to wait for.

The apoſtle holdeth forth Chriſt to be the ſoul's maſter (he is the Shepherd, Lord, King, and Biſhop of the ſoul), to whom every one muſt give an account. Now what muſt men give an account to him of? Is it not of the grace and truth which comes by him? If any man hath received that, obeyed that, believing the ſound, report, and voice of that, and ſo loved and followed it, will it not be ſaid unto him, "Well "done, good and faithful ſervant?" But if any one hath neglected and deſpiſed the grace (not improving the talent, but improving his own natural abilities, while God's talent lay wrapped up in a napkin, and hid in the earth) will not that perſon be judged a ſlothful ſervant as to improving the talent, whatever he hath been as to improving his own natural parts and abilities?

Now mind: If Chriſt be an inward, a ſpiritual maſter, what is his law but the inward teachings of his Spirit? A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you like unto me, him ſhall ye hear in all things; and he that will not hear him, how ſecure and con-

fident ſoever he may ſeem to himſelf of his ſtate at preſent; yet it ſhall come to paſs that he ſhall be cut off and deſtroyed from among God's people. Are not the words, the voice, the motions, the leadings, the drawings, the commands of his Spirit, the law to all that are ſpiritual? Doth he not ſay to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; to another, Do this, and he doth it? Here is the glory of the great Lord and King, and of the great High-prieſt, over the houſhold of God, in that he giveth forth precepts according to his holy will and pleaſure; and all his ſheep know his voice, and follow him; and all his children and ſervants obſerve and obey him.

If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit, ſaid the holy apoſtle. Here are the limits of the children of the new covenant; here is the law of life (the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus), the law of the new covenant, written in the heart, which none can read but with the new eye. The children of the fleſh may read the letter, and comprehend concerning the letter, and gather rules and obſervations out of the letter; but the children of the new covenant alone can read the law of life in the heart. And this law is the path of life, the path of all that are renewed by God's Spirit, which the Jew inward is to read diligently, and to have his delight therein, and to meditate thereon day and night. And this law is light, true light, pure light, ſpiritual light, yea, the light which is eternal, and never varies; and the commandment which comes therefrom is a lamp, which they that receive know it to be no leſs than life everlaſting; for indeed the commandments of Chriſt's Spirit are felt to be ſo. Now this commandment, this law, this light, ſhines in the darkneſs at firſt; but afterwards out of the darkneſs more and more (as it is believed, received, obeyed, and walked in) unto the perfect day; ſee Prov. iv. 18, 19.

Queſt. But how may I wait for, come to know, and receive this law? I am not of the ſtock of the Jews natural,

natural, but of the isles of the Gentiles; how may I meet with and receive the law of life from Christ, or the grace and truth which comes by him?

Ans. The way of receiving it, is to mind that which enlightens and renews the mind, drawing it out of the nature and spirit of this world, and out of the ways, worships, knowledge, and customs thereof, into that which seasons it otherwise, and opens it another way. Now here the grace is met with, here the truth is met with, here the Spirit of life is met with; here the inward change is felt, and the new law written in the heart and spirit. And here the mind comes to prove and know what is that good, that acceptable and perfect will of God: for God is the teacher in the new covenant, and his teachings are here, even in that which he renews. He gathereth into his Spirit, and he teacheth those that abide in his Spirit, and giveth unto them eternal life, eternal virtue, eternal nourishment, in and from his Spirit. But they that may be great searchers into the letter, and comprehenders from the letter, and practisers according to their apprehensions of the letter (not being gathered into nor reading in the Spirit) they miss of eternal life, and of the redeeming arm and power, and are not saved from sin by the blood of Christ; but are yet in transgression, darkness, and death, even until now. The Lord, who knoweth all things, make manifest their estates and conditions unto them, that they perish not for ever; but may learn of the Father to know the Son, and of the Son to know the Father, and come to witness true life manifested in their own hearts, that they may have fellowship with the Father and Son therein. For he that is not turned from darkness unto light (from the darkness within in his own heart, unto the light which God causeth to shine there) doth not yet know Christ livingly and savingly; but is only in the notions and comprehensions concerning him, which cannot save. For it is the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, inwardly revealed against the power of sin and death, which is alone able to save therefrom.

Now conſider with yourſelves (all who would not be deceived in this matter) have ye known this law? Have ye received it in meaſure, and do ye wait to know and receive it daily more and more? Then are ye Chriſtians indeed, and of the houſe of Jacob, which walk in the light of the Lord, and in the light of the holy city, whoſe light the Lamb is. But without this law, without this light, without the inward writing of God's Spirit in your hearts, ye cannot be inward Jews, nor children of the new covenant.

Theſe are weighty things, and to be conſidered weightily, and weighed in the balance of the ſanctuary. Oh! wait to know what it is to go into the ſanctuary, and to weigh things there in the balance thereof, which exactly and infallibly weigheth and determineth whatever is brought thither! For of a truth ye cannot underſtand any ſcripture aright which treateth of any ſpiritual and heavenly myſtery, but as ye are taught of God, to bring it unto the balance of the ſanctuary, and to weigh it there; where all your own apprehenſions, meanings, and conceptions will fall, and the mind and intent of God's Spirit be alone owned and juſtified. Ah! what a vaſt difference there is between weighing mens apprehenſions and conceivings upon ſcriptures in the balance of their own underſtandings, and weighing them in the true balance! In the former are all the erring judgments; but in the latter is the true, unerring judgment of God's own Spirit, in the light which is eternal; which judgment will ſtand for ever.

III.

A brief Relation concerning myſelf, in Reference to what has befallen me in my Purſuit after Truth.

I Was acquainted with a ſpring of life from my childhood, which enlightened me in my tender years, and pointed my heart towards the Lord, begetting true ſenſe in me, and faith, and hope, and love,

love, and humility, and meekneſs, &c. ſo that indeed I was a wonder to ſome that knew me, becauſe of the favour and life of religion which dwelt in my heart, and appeared in my converſation.

But I never durſt truſt the ſpring of my life, and the ſpringings up of life therefrom; but, in reading the ſcriptures, gathered what knowledge I could therefrom, and ſet this over the ſpring and ſpringings of life in me, and indeed judged that I ought ſo to do.

Notwithſtanding which, the Lord was very tender and merciful to me, helping me to pray, and helping me to underſtand the ſcriptures, and opening and warming my heart every day.

And truly my ſoul was very near the Lord, and my heart was made and preſerved very low and humble before him, and very ſenſible of his rich love and mercy to me in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; as I did daily from my heart cry grace, grace, unto him, in every thing my ſoul received and partook of from him.

Indeed I did not look to have been ſo broken, ſhattered, and diſtreſſed, as I afterwards was, and could by no means underſtand the meaning thereof, my heart truly and earneſtly deſiring after the Lord, and not having the ſenſe of any guilt upon me. Divers came to ſee me, ſome to enquire into, and conſider of, my condition; others to bewail it, and (if poſſible) adminiſter ſome relief, help, and comfort to me; and divers were the judgments they had concerning me. Some would ſay it was deep melancholy; others would narrowly ſearch, and enquire how, and in what manner, and in what way I had walked; and were jealous that I had ſinned againſt the Lord, and provoked him ſome way or other, and that ſome iniquity lay as a load upon me: but, after thorough converſe with me, they would ſtill expreſs that they were of another mind; and that the hand of the Lord was in it, and it was an eminent caſe, and would end in good to my ſoul.

At that time, when I was broken and daſhed to pieces in my religion, I was in a congregational way;

but ſoon after parted with them, yet in great love, relating to them how the hand of the Lord was upon me, and how I was ſmitten in the inward part of my religion, and could not now hold up an outward form of that which I inwardly wanted, having loſt my God, my Chriſt, my faith, my knowledge, my life, my all. And ſo we parted very lovingly, I wiſhing them well, even the preſence of that God whom I wanted; promiſing to return to them again, if ever I met with that which my ſoul wanted, and had clearneſs in the Lord ſo to do.

After I was parted from them, I never joined to any way or people; but lay mourning day and night, pleading with the Lord why he had forſaken me, and why I ſhould be made ſo miſerable through my love to him, and ſincere deſires after him. For truly I can ſay, I had not been capable of ſo much miſery as my ſoul lay in for many years, had not my love been ſo deep and true towards the Lord my God, and my deſires ſo great after the ſenſible enjoyment of his ſpirit, according to the promiſe and way of the goſpel. Yet this I can alſo ſay, in uprightneſs of heart, It was not gifts I deſired to appear and ſhine before men in; but grace and holineſs, and the ſpirit of the Lord dwelling in me, to act my heart by his grace, and to preſerve me in holineſs.

Now indeed the Lord at length had compaſſion on me, and viſited me; though in a time and way wherein I expected him not: nor was I willing (as to the natural part) to have that the way which God ſhewed me to be the way; but the Lord opened my eye, and that which I know to be of him in me cloſed with it, and owned it; and the pure ſeed was raiſed by his power, and my heart taught to know and own the ſeed, and to bow and worſhip before the Lord in the pure power, which was then in my heart. So that of a truth I ſenſibly knew and felt my Saviour, and was taught by him to take up the croſs, and to deny that underſtanding, knowledge, and wiſdom, which had ſo long ſtood in my way; and then I learned that leſſon (being

(being really taught it of the Lord) what it is to become a fool for Chriſt's ſake. I cannot ſay but I had learned ſomewhat of it formerly; but I never knew how to keep to what I had learned till that day.

And then God ſhewed me (by degrees, as he nurtured me up in the heavenly ſenſe and experience of his ſpirit) the workings of the good in me, and the workings of the ſubtilty; and how himſelf had, in time paſt, taught me to pray, and to underſtand the ſcriptures, and to believe in his Son, and know ſome things aright; but withal, how a knowledge and underſtanding of another nature had crept in, and gained ground upon me (which indeed I knew not how to diſtinguiſh thoroughly from the other, and watch againſt) and ſo the truth came not to live in me, nor I to live in that, according to the utmoſt deſire and travail of my ſoul.

But now of a truth, by this bleſſed viſitation of the everlaſting goſpel, the Lord hath at length brought me back to the ſame ſpring I was acquainted with at firſt, and joined my heart in true ſenſe and underſtanding to it; ſo that the life that I live is by the ſpringing up of life in me; and I know the Lord my God, by being daily taught by him ſo to do; and I love him, by feeling my heart circumciſed and conſtrained through the new nature thereunto. And truly it is natural to the good ſeed in me, and to my ſoul in and through the ſame, to truſt my Father, and to ſuffer any thing that he requires of me, who freely giveth me both to do and to ſuffer: for indeed I live not of myſelf, but by a continual gift and quickening of life in my heart.

And oh! that others alſo could come to hear the teſtimony of truth and life from God's Holy Spirit, and be turned thereby to the pure principle and ſpirit of life itſelf (which many formerly had a true taſte of, but are now turned aſide to another nature and ſpirit, though they themſelves know it not) that they might witneſs the goſpel-power, and know the ſpiritual and heavenly Jeruſalem, and ſuck at her breaſts, and be dandled

dandled on her knee, who is the mother and bringer-up of all that are truly living.

IV.

A Queſtion about preaching the everlaſting Goſpel anſwered.

Queſt. HOW is the everlaſting goſpel (wherein Chriſt is truly made known, and ſalvation really witneſſed in the hearts of thoſe that receive it) preached at this day? How hath the Lord appointed it to be preached, and how is it preached, and how may men come to hear it, that their ſouls may live? Are not they bleſſed that hear the joyful ſound thereof? Are not they wretched and miſerable, and blind and naked, who miſtake and miſs concerning that ſound of it, which it pleaſeth the ſpirit of the Lord to give forth in this day?

It is wonderful to conſider how the truth, the goſpel, the life, the power which ſaves, is one and the ſame in all ages and generations, and yet ſtill hid from the wiſe, prudent, profeſſing eye, in every age and generation.

Now let me ſpeak a few words to this thing; not only from what I have felt in my heart, but have alſo read in the ſcriptures of truth.

Anſw. The goſpel, after the apoſtaſy, is thus to be preached: "Fear God, and give glory to him, for "the hour of his judgment is come: and worſhip "him that made heaven and earth," &c. Rev. xiv. 6, 7. He that knoweth the preacher that preacheth this; he that hath heard this preached in his own heart; he that hath met with that fear which God's Spirit teacheth and giveth; he that hath known the hour of God's judgment, and had the axe laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and hath been taught by the Son to worſhip the Father in ſpirit and truth; he hath without doubt met with the goſpel, the everlaſting goſpel: and if God require of ſuch an one, and aſſiſt him by his Spirit

Spirit and power to preach this to others, he is a preacher of the everlaſting goſpel, and an able miniſter of the New Teſtament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. But all ſhould take heed of preaching their own formings and conceivings upon the letter (as too many do in this day, who reproach, revile, and perſecute the life and power), for that falls ſhort of true preaching the latter.

Oh! that theſe things were weighty upon mens ſpirits, that they might learn aright to ſearch and underſtand the ſcriptures, and know how the Father hath revealed the Son in this day, and how to come to him, to receive life from him! For many (who ſeem knowing) through ignorance, miſtake in this matter, and ſo run on in their own wills, wiſdoms, and comprehenſion of things, and miſs of the drawings of the Father, and ſo come not aright to the Son; but only according to what they themſelves imagine and apprehend from what they have gathered and conceived upon the ſcriptures.

God, who commanded light to ſhine in this outward world, hath judged it neceſſary to cauſe the light of his Spirit to ſhine inwardly in mens hearts; and this gives the knowledge of the ſcriptures, and the true ſenſe and diſcerning of inward and ſpiritual things; yea, here the Son is known, and his blood felt cleanſing; which the ſcriptures without do not make manifeſt; but this the ſcriptures are a clear and faithful record of, and teſtimony to. Men had need take heed how they read, and how they underſtand, the ſcriptures (in what light, in what ſpirit), for it is eaſy erring; but without the preſence and guidance of God herein, men cannot walk ſafely. And truly it is great preſumption in any man to read the ſcriptures boldly, without fear and reverence to him who is the author of them; or to put any of his meanings and conceivings upon God's words; which it is hard for him to forbear doing, who readeth them in the liberty of his own ſpirit, out of the light of God's Spirit, which is the limit and yoke of the true readers and underſtanders of the ſcriptures.

V. *Concerning*

V.

Concerning Chriſt's Miniſtry, or Prieſthood.

CHRIST is made by God a miniſter, or high-prieſt, over the ſpiritual Iſrael of God. "Not "after the law of a carnal commandment, but after "the power of an endleſs life" (as Heb. vii. 16. and chap. viii. 2.); and he miniſters with his Spirit and power unto and in all his. So that he that knows Chriſt's miniſtry, knows the power, the life, the Spirit in which he miniſters; but he that is not acquainted with theſe, is yet to learn to know Chriſt aright, and to believe in him unto life and ſalvation, which are wrapped up, comprehended, revealed, and communicated in the power wherewith he miniſters. For the very beginning of Chriſt's miniſtry is in the Spirit and power of God, whereby he redeems out of the ſpirit and power of Satan; and to this men are to be turned, if they will witneſs ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, even to the light and power of God's Holy Spirit, which breaks the darkneſs and ſtrength of the kingdom of Satan in the heart. For indeed all literal profeſſions, beliefs, knowledges, and practices, out of the life and power, Satan can transform himſelf into, and uphold and maintain his kingdom under, in the hearts of men; but the inward light and power of life breaks it, where the minds of people are by the Spirit of the Lord turned thereto, and ſubjected under its rule and government.

VI.

Concerning the true Knowledge of Chriſt.

IT was ſaid, in the time of the prophets, under the miniſtration of the law, that "The prieſt's lips "ſhould keep knowledge, and they" (that is, the outward Iſrael, Iſrael after the fleſh) "ſhould ſeek the "law

" law at his mouth; for he is the meſſenger of the " Lord of Hoſts," Mal. ii. 7. And doth not Chriſt, our High-Prieſt, and the Apoſtle of our profeſſion, keep all the people's knowledge? And are they not all to ſeek the law of life, the law of the new covenant, at his mouth? Is not he the Meſſenger of the covenant, who brings tidings of the covenant of life and peace; and muſt not the ſoul that will live hear him? Iſa lv. 1, 2, 3. Is not he the Sealed and Sent-One of the Father, to open the blind eye, and to bring the priſoner out of the pit? Is not he the Shepherd of the ſpiritual flock? And are not ſuch as are called out of the world (and ſanctified by him) his ſheep? And are not all his ſheep to hear his voice, and follow him? Is not he the Prophet, like Moſes, appointed by God, for all the ſpiritual Iſrael to hear in all things? Is not his Spirit to teach and lead into all truth? Can any elſe lead into truth? Or can any come into truth unleſs they be led?) And they that will not hear the voice of his Spirit in theſe latter days (ſeeing God, in theſe laſt days, ſpeaketh by his Son, and ſaith to all the true diſciples and followers of the Lamb, *Hear ye him)*; are they not to be cut off from the comforts of his Spirit, from the pure refreſhments of his Spirit, from the life of his Spirit, and from the living Iſrael, and ſo to be numbered among the dead and unredeemed?

Chriſt ſaith, " I am the way, the truth, and the " life." It is he alone that is the living way, which leads to the Father. Now how is Chriſt the way to the Father? How is he the truth? How is he the life? Is he ſo by any literal and outward knowledge of him; or by the inward, ſpiritual, and living knowledge of him? They that know his Spirit, know the way; and they that walk in his Spirit, walk in the way. This is moſt certain: they that walk not in the oldneſs of the letter, but in the newneſs and life of the Spirit, they walk in the new and living way. How is the letter old; and how is the Spirit new? How is Chriſt known after the fleſh, and ſo to be known no more? And how is he known after the Spirit, and ſo to be known

known for ever? Man is but flesh, and his knowledge and understanding of things, of his own fetching from the literal relation and descriptions of them, is but the knowledge of the fleshly part; but there is a new eye, a new understanding, a new heart and mind, to which the Father reveals him; and that knowledge which the new-birth receives of the Father, that is spiritual, true, pure, heavenly, living knowledge. And so the children of the kingdom are to dwell in that light wherein the Father reveals the things of the kingdom; and this differenceth them from all the literal knowers of the things of God upon the face of the earth. Now this is it which satisfieth my heart concerning my knowledge of the things of God, even that I have so learned to know Christ, and to believe in him, (and to repent from dead works, and to obey him, and suffer for him) as I could never have learned, unless the Father himself had taught me. And now seeing and partaking of the difference, I cannot but testify against all dead teachings, unto the Spirit's teaching, which is living; knowing assuredly, that no other teaching or learning the things of God will amount to true knowledge, or be owned in the day of the Lord, but that which is of and in the Spirit.

A few Words more concerning the Right Way of Knowing, as it is witnessed unto in the Scriptures, and experienced in the Hearts of those that truly and livingly know the Lord.

"WISDOM is justified of her children," said Christ, Mat. xi. 19. Now, who is wisdom? What is wisdom? Is it not the heavenly mother of all the living? It is the Spirit which begets all, who are truly begotten to the Lord. Now where, and into what, doth he beget them? In the earthly nature, in the earthly wisdom, in the earthly spirit, or out of it; in and into that which is heavenly?

Now

Now all that are of this heavenly begetting and birth, they know (own and juſtify) that wiſdom, wherein they are begotten. They juſtify the nature of truth, the light of truth, the life of truth, the power of truth, the appearance of truth in their age and generation. The falſe birth will own and juſtify the words of truth which were formerly ſpoken, and the former appearances thereof (as the Scribes and Phariſees did Moſes and the prophets, who denied Chriſt, who was truth, and ſpake truth beyond them); but the true birth knoweth and juſtifieth the preſent words, and the preſent appearances of truth, which the falſe birth ſtill ſlighteth and deſpiſeth.

If any man therefore will judge aright concerning the things of God, he muſt be ſure to be of the true birth, (a child of the true wiſdom) and that he keep to that nature, Spirit, and birth, to which God giveth the diſcerning. For there is an eye of diſcerning, and a way of diſcerning, which is a gift; and he that will know aright, and judge aright, muſt keep to the gift of light, the gift of grace, the gift of the Spirit, the gift of the holy anointing; and be watchful and careful to judge in it, and take heed of judging out of it. For though a man be come to a ſpiritual ſtate, and hath received the gift of grace, knowledge, and diſcerning; yet if he be not watchful to keep to the gift, he may eaſily err, and judge amiſs.

VIII.

Concerning Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, which is the Righteouſneſs of all his Saints.

CHRIST is the head, his ſaints the body; and do they not all partake of one nature, one Spirit, one virtue, one life, one righteouſneſs? Doth not Chriſt give them of his own righteouſneſs, even of the righteouſneſs which his Father gave him? And is not that righteouſneſs which Chriſt giveth them, their righteouſ-

righteouſneſs? What was Chriſt's righteouſneſs? Was it not the righteouſneſs of God revealed in him, communicated to him, and made his? And what is their righteouſneſs? Is not the ſame righteouſneſs revealed in them, communicated to them, and made theirs, in and by Chriſt? Are not they made partakers of the divine nature, in and through him, and made the righteouſneſs of God in him? Chriſt truſted his Father, and obeyed his Father in all things. Now was not that an effect of the righteous nature and Spirit of his Father in him? "He became obedient unto death, "even the death of the croſs." And, Oh! how was his Father pleaſed therewith! Did not he ſay to him, as to Abraham in the like caſe? "Becauſe thou haſt "done this thing, in bleſſing I will bleſs thee; and "in multiplying I will multiply thy ſeed; and thou "ſhalt ſee of the travail of thy ſoul, and be ſatisfied:" for thou ſhalt not only gather the "diſperſed of Iſ-"rael," but "inherit the Gentiles" alſo; "and have "the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion."

Conſider now ſeriouſly, in God's fear; Is Chriſt's obedience to the law of Moſes the ſaints evangelical righteouſneſs? Or is his righteouſneſs revealed in them, from faith to faith? Was his being circumciſed outwardly, their circumciſion? Or is his inward circumciſing them, their circumciſion? Which of theſe is the goſpel circumciſion; the circumciſing of his fleſh outwardly, or the circumciſing of their hearts inwardly? Again, was his being outwardly baptized, their baptiſm? Or is the inward baptiſm of the Spirit, the goſpel baptiſm? Doth he not fulfil the righteouſneſs of the law of the Spirit of life in them, who believe in his Spirit and power, and walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit? Was not Chriſt juſtified in the Spirit? And are not all his juſtified in the Spirit alſo? Whatſoever is of God, whatſoever is wrought in God, doth not God juſtify? Is not the perſon here juſtified, the faith juſtified, the works juſtified with the juſtification of life, and of God's Holy Spirit, from whence they proceed? And here Chriſt's words are verified,

verified, "He that doth truth, cometh to the light, "that his deeds may be manifeſt, that they are "wrought in God," John iii. 21. And are not his deeds then juſtified? He that is united to the Spirit of God, (and acquainted with the Spirit of God, and knows his voice) hears, and ſees, and feels, and underſtands what God condemns, and alſo what he juſtifies; who never condemns any thing that ariſeth from himſelf, and is wrought in himſelf; but only that which cometh from the fleſh, and is wrought in the fleſh. And here he ſees (in the true light) what faith is imputed for righteouſneſs, and what faith is ſhut out; and what works are accounted righteous, and what works are ſhut out: and how Enoch walked with God in the righteous Spirit and life, and was therein juſtified; and how Noah built an ark in the faith, being moved with fear, and was therein with his family ſaved. So Abel ſacrificed in the faith, "By which "he obtained witneſs that he was righteous, God teſ-"tifying of his gifts," Heb. xi. 4. Mark; his ſacrifice, his gift, came from a righteous Spirit, and ſo the righteous God teſtified of his gift; and ſuch are all the ſacrifices now, that are offered up in God's Spirit, and in the true faith. And ſo we alſo ſee how Abraham (the father of the faithful) was "juſtified "by works," James ii. 21. and how God was pleaſed with him, becauſe he had done that thing of offering up his only ſon at God's command. Alſo Phinehas's zeal for the Lord, in executing judgment, was highly eſteemed of the Lord, and "was counted to him for "righteouſneſs, unto all generations for evermore," Pſa. cvi. 30, 31.

But alas! How do men miſtake about the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, about the goſpel-righteouſneſs; and, in effect, make it but the righteouſneſs of the law, but the righteouſneſs of the old covenant, performed in the perſon of another for us, and imputed to us! Whereas it is the righteouſneſs of another covenant, even of the new and living covenant, which the Lord Jeſus worketh, both in us and for us. Now whoever

receiveth this righteouſneſs from him, and is clothed with it by him, he findeth it to be the righteouſneſs of the goſpel, the new and living righteouſneſs, the true and everlaſting righteouſneſs, both of the Father and Son, which the ſouls of thoſe that truly believe, partake of in them and with them.

Now conſider a ſcripture or two, to evidence this further.

The apoſtle ſaith, 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. "The Lord "is that Spirit" (the Lord Jeſus is the ſecond Adam, the quickening Spirit) in whom the "veil is done "away," ver. 15. And ſo the true Chriſtian (in whom the "veil is done away," who is come into the true liberty of the Spirit) "with open face, behold-"ing as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, is changed "into the ſame image."

Now mind: if man be changed into the heavenly image, if he partake of Chriſt's image, is he not made righteous, and become truly righteous therein? Was not the image of the firſt Adam holy and righteous? And is not the image of the ſecond Adam holy and righteous alſo? And are not they that are changed from the image of ſin and Satan, into Chriſt's image, holy and righteous in that image? Are they not changed from unrighteouſneſs to righteouſneſs? And is not this image, whereinto they are changed, and wherein they are new created by God, their righteouſneſs? Whoever is ingrafted into Chriſt, is he not ingrafted into righteouſneſs? Cut off from unrighteouſneſs, and ingrafted into righteouſneſs; even into the righteous nature and Spirit of the Lamb? And doth he not partake of the righteouſneſs of the Vine or Olive-tree, into which he is ingrafted? And doth not that become his righteouſneſs? If the root be holy, then are alſo the branches; and if the root be righteous, ſo are alſo the branches; and that is the righteouſneſs and holineſs of the branches, which they have from the root.

The other ſcripture is that of Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24. which ſpeaks of putting off the old man, which is corrupt

corrupt according to the deceitful luſts; and of being renewed in the ſpirit of the mind, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. Mark; here is the new creation. Now conſider well, what is the holineſs and righteouſneſs of the new creation? Is not that which is put off, old, corrupt, unholy, unrighteous? Is not that which is put on, new, holy, righteous; even the image before ſpoken of, Chriſt the heavenly image, the new man, which is created and formed in man? And then God owneth ſuch to be his people, Iſai. li. 16.

No man can do that which is righteous, but he that firſt partakes of God's righteous nature and Spirit. The tree muſt firſt be good, before the fruit can be ſo. A man muſt firſt be renewed and made righteous, before he can bring forth righteouſneſs. So that he that doth bring forth righteouſneſs, without doubt he is inwardly renewed, without doubt he is inwardly righteous. Did the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law? Then, without doubt, they were partakers of another nature than the old corrupt nature, which is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. "Little children, let no man deceive "you; he that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even "as he is righteous," 1 John iii. 7. This is the true and weighty judgment of God's Spirit; and he that judgeth otherwiſe is deceived, and erreth in this particular; and ſheweth that he doth not yet know God's righteouſneſs, and Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is one and the ſame. For, "If ye know that he is right-"eous, ye know that every one that doeth righteouſ-"neſs is born of him," 1 John ii. 29. Mark; the new birth precedes the doing of righteouſneſs; and the doing of righteouſneſs is a certain evidence of the new birth. He that doth righteouſneſs is born of God; this fruit can ariſe from no other but the pure, living, heavenly root.

IX.

Of the Grace of the Goſpel.

THE prophets of old propheſied of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. Now what was the glory which ſhould follow? Was it not the ſetting up Chriſt's inward and inviſible kingdom in the hearts of men? Was it not God's abundant pouring out his Spirit, and filling veſſels therewith; ſo that the Spirit of grace and of glory ſhould reſt upon believers, as it had done upon Chriſt? Was it not God's tabernacling in men, and becoming their God, and making them his people? Was it not the fulfilling the precious promiſes concerning the goſpel-ſtate, whereby men ſhould be made partakers of the divine nature, (of the heavenly image) and be changed from glory to glory, by the renewing Spirit and power? Was it not to have fellowſhip with Chriſt, not only in his ſufferings and death, but alſo in his reſurrection and kingdom; where the bread and wine of the kingdom is eaten and drank, and the feaſt of fat things partaken of? Is it not a glorious ſtate to be tranſlated out of the kingdom of darkneſs, into the kingdom of the dear Son? And to dwell with Chriſt in the kingdom; and ſup there with him, and he with them? To have fellowſhip (pure fellowſhip, living fellowſhip) with the Father and the Son, that the bleſſedneſs and joy of the ſoul in the goſpel-ſtate may be full?

The law was a miniſtration of ſhadows; for under it were the various and many ſhadows of the good things to come, which were to be poſſeſſed and enjoyed in the days of the goſpel. In the law there was an outward people, (the Jews outward) an outward covenant, an outward land of bleſſings, plenty, and reſt; an outward Sion, outward Jeruſalem, outward temple, outward ark, outward table, outward laver, outward candleſticks, outward lamps, outward oil, outward

outward anointing, outward circumciſion and ſacrifices, outward new moons and ſabbaths, outward kings, outward prieſts, and outward victories over outward enemies, &c.

But now, in the goſpel, there is the ſubſtance of theſe things inwardly revealed, and inwardly poſſeſſed and enjoyed; even the Jew inward, (the new man of the heart) an inward covenant of life and peace, an inward land of bleſſedneſs, of reſt; an inward ſabbath or day of goſpel-reſt (which the true believer keepeth in the faith, not bearing any burden, kindling any fire, nor doing any work of the fleſh therein); an inward Sion, an inward Jeruſalem or holy city; an inward temple, (in which is the Holy of Holies) an inward ark, in which the law of life is treaſured up; inward table, inward laver, inward candleſtick, inward lamp, inward oil, inward anointing, inward circumciſion and ſacrifices, and ſolemn ſeaſons; the inward King of glory, inward prophet and prieſt known, even Chriſt within, who giveth victories and dominion over the inward enemies, and giveth his to partake of his kingdom and prieſthood, Rev. i. 6. Yea, and (by his Spirit poured out upon them) maketh his ſeers and prophets alſo, as it is written, "I will pour out my "Spirit upon all fleſh, and your Sons and your daugh-"ters ſhall propheſy."

Now, was not this fulfilled after the ſufferings of Chriſt in the fleſh? And is it not daily more and more fulfilled, as the ſufferings of Chriſt, which are yet behind, are filled up in his body the church? Did not the glory then ſucceed? Was not the goſpel ſpirit and power then revealed and beſtowed? And did it not bring into the goſpel-ſtate? Were not the precious promiſes fulfilled therein? 2 Pet. i. 5, 6. Are they not all yea and amen in Chriſt? Is not the veil or covering taken away in him? Is not the glory revealed in him? Is not the Lord one, and his name one in him? Is there not glory then in the higheſt, on earth peace, and good-will among men, as well as good-will in God towards men? Where is then the enmity

and wars; the luſts and fightings? Where is the envy of Judah or Ephraim, or the vexing one another here? Are not theſe things drowned in the love and in the peace, in the life and in the power which is revealed in the goſpel-ſtate, and ſprings up in the goſpel-ſpirit? They know not what ſpirit they are of, who would have fire come down from heaven upon the diſobedient and gainſayers. To be ſure, they are not of the goſpel-ſpirit, not of Chriſt's Spirit, who came not to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt, and to overcome by the overflowings of his love and tender viſits of his life. And how do his children make war in this day? Is it not with innocency, with meekneſs, with patience, with bowels of love, with long-ſuffering, with truth, with righteouſneſs, like the followers of the Lamb, like the children of him who abounds therein? Indeed there is a ſword given, there is a threſhing inſtrument, there are darts and arrows to be ſhot into the hearts of the King's enemies, Pſa. xlv. 3, 4, 5. But it is not to deſtroy the creature, but rather to ſmite and wound that ſpirit which captivates it, that the creature may witneſs deliverance and freedom therefrom: though it is true, that they who join with that ſpirit, muſt partake of its judgments and plagues, even to deſtruction, if they ſo continue.

Now this glory is wrapped up in the grace which is miniſtered by the goſpel; and where grace is ſown, the glory is ſown (there is a true ſeed of the glory); and where grace abounds, the glory abounds. It was ſaid concerning the firſt gathering of Chriſtians by the apoſtles, that "great grace was upon them all," Acts iv. 33. and indeed, it was a precious and glorious ſtate, which they were gathered into and brought forth in. Now the grace is revealed again, the grace is poured forth again, the grace hath appeared, teaching and bringing ſalvation again; doth it not behove every one to know it and partake of it? Not to be content with words concerning the grace, but to know the grace itſelf, receiving it from the hand of him that giveth it, and hearing the voice, reproofs, and inſtructions

ſtructions of it? "Hear, and your ſouls ſhall live." Whom ſhould they hear? Are they not to hear Chriſt, the great prophet? How ſhall they hear Chriſt? Is there any other way, than by hearing his grace teaching them? Than by hearkening to the meaſure of the gift of grace, which is by Jeſus Chriſt? "The law "was given by Moſes" (all his people, all his children, all his family were to come under the law, to be governed by the law). "Grace and truth comes by "Jeſus Chriſt," (all his children, all his people, all his family are to come under the grace, to be governed by the grace) who is faithful in all his houſe, diſpenſing of his grace and truth to all his, as Moſes did of the law (committed to him) to all under him. So then, all that deſire to be truly Chriſtians, let them wait to know what the grace and truth which Chriſt giveth is, and to partake of it and come under it; under its teachings, under its influences, under its protection, under its government, (by being ſubject to it; and in every thing guided by it) that they may know what that ſcripture means, in the true and weighty experience: "Sin ſhall not have dominion "over you, for ye are not under the law, but under "grace," Rom. vi. 14.

X.

A Queſtion anſwered concerning real Holineſs.

Queſt. *ARE not perſons to be really holy (really ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus) who would be received by the Lord, and enjoy fellowſhip with him as ſons and daughters, in the goſpel of his Son?*

Anſ. Under the law, that people of the Jews were to be ſeparated from the Heathen, to be outwardly circumciſed and cleanſed by the water and blood of purifying, (which ſanctified to the purifying of the fleſh) and not to touch any dead or unclean thing; for any ſuch thing polluted them, and thoſe that were

unclean muſt be kept without the camp, as unfit for the holy communion with God and his people, till cleanſed.

Now what did this ſignify? Did it not ſignify that pure and clean ſtate inwardly, which God requireth under the goſpel? Did it not ſignify the inward circumciſion of the heart and ſpirit before the Lord, and the cleanſing of the ſoul, mind, and body, before its appearing to worſhip in the inward and ſpiritual temple? Heb. x. 22. Is there not a Jeruſalem under the goſpel, into which no uncircumciſed or unclean thing is to enter, or appear before God there? Mark what the apoſtle ſaith, Heb. xii. "Ye are not come to the "mount that might be touched," to outward Mount Sinai, or Sion, to the appearance of God there; but ye are come to the inward Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to fellowſhip with God and Chriſt there, ver. 18.—22.

Now what is the way to this holy fellowſhip and heavenly communion? Doth not God himſelf preſcribe it? 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. "Wherefore come out "from among them, and be ſeparated," ſaith the Lord, "and touch not the unclean thing, and I will "receive you; I will be a Father unto you, and ye "ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord "Almighty." For God would have a people repreſentatively holy in the time of the law, (yet not deſtitute of inward holineſs) and he will have a people really holy in the time of the goſpel. "He that de-"fileth the temple of God, him will God deſtroy:" but keep the temple pure, holy, and then the Holy God will dwell and appear there, according to his promiſe; "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." And this is eternally true, and witneſſed by certain experience among them that know the Lord; that if any thing that is unclean be touched, there is a defilement thereby, and there muſt be a cleanſing felt, before an admittance into the preſence of the Holy God, and enjoying fellowſhip with him again.

XI. *Con-*

XI.

Concerning the Law of Sin in the Fleshly Mind, and the Law of Life and Holiness in the Renewed Mind; and whence each have their Strength.

WHAT is the law of sin? Who writes it in the mind? And what is it when it is writ? "When "lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin "when it is finished, bringeth forth death," Jam. i. 15. So that the first beginning of sin is *evil lust*; and the whole corruption that is in the world, is through lust, 2 Pet. i. 4. Now whence cometh that lust? Is it not begotten in the mind and spirit by the tempter? And what is the law, both of the lusting, and of the sins committed through the lust? Is it not the lustful nature, the lustful will, the lustful wisdom, the lustful desires and passions, which the god of this world begetteth in the worldly part? So on the other hand, there is an holy law in the holy and renewed mind. Whence cometh that law? Doth it not come from God? Doth it not come from the Holy One? Is it not he that blots out Satan's law, and then writes his own law in the hearts of his? Now, what is his law? Is it not of a contrary nature to Satan's law? What God writeth in the hearts of his, teaching them holiness, requiring holiness, enlightening the mind unto holiness; manifesting the good, perfect, and acceptable will, is not that his law? Under the old covenant the law was at a distance, writ in tables of stone; but under the new covenant the law is nigh, written in the heart by the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. For he is King, the inward King, the spiritual King of his people, who cometh to reform, and amend by his covenant, what was amiss under the former. Now, because he found under the old covenant, that laws outwardly written would never bring men into, and keep men in, subjection to his Father; therefore he writeth inwardly by his Spirit and power, and visiteth with

with the inward eternal day, even the day of his power; and ſo maketh his people willing to receive the law of his Spirit of life, which maketh "free from "the law of ſin and death." For this law being inward and ſpiritual, and more powerful than the other, overcomes the other law, even the "law of ſin and "death," (though it be inward and ſpiritual, and inwardly written alſo) and ſetteth free from it; Rom. vi. 18. and viii. 2.

Now theſe laws have each their ſtrength from him that writes them. The law of ſin and death hath its ſtrength from the god of this world, the prince of darkneſs, who ruleth in all that are diſobedient to the Spirit and power of Chriſt. The law of holineſs, the law of life, the law of faith in the power, the law of obedience to God's Holy Spirit, hath its ſtrength from the Holy One, from the Prince of life and peace; for Satan is near his ſubjects, and dwells in them, to act them, and to make his laws of ſin and diſobedience forcible in them. Every motion and temptation to ſin he kindles, and adds vigour to, that he may ſet on flame the wicked ſpirits of men after ſin, vanity, pride, luſt, uncleanneſs, cruelty, and all manner of wickedneſs, that they may draw on iniquity as with cart-ropes, and drink it in as the ox doth water. (Jam. iii. 6.) And the Lord alſo is near to the ſoul; the King of holineſs, the King of righteouſneſs and peace is near, to give ſtrength to every holy deſire in the heart, and to every motion of his Spirit towards that which is good and holy. Hence it is, that he that truſts God's Spirit, watching to, and following the movings and drawings thereof, finds life flow in, virtue and ſtrength flow in, to carry on effectually in that which the Spirit of the Lord moves to. So that come but truly to know a motion, to underſtand the drawings and leadings of God's Spirit, ſtrength is never wanting to him who giveth up in the faith to follow the Lord in that which he moves and draws to. And this is the great ſkill of Chriſtianity, to come inwardly to know the Lord; to know the inward appearances

pearances of the Shepherd, his leadings out into the paſtures, where eternal life is fed on; and again into the fold of reſt, which is no leſs than the boſom of love, and life eternal. Now the growth of the new man, the growth of the Chriſtian ſtate, is in the exerciſe under the law of life, under the law of the Spirit. For the Spirit exerciſeth the mind by his law, and the mind is to give up to the exerciſe thereof, and to wait upon the Lord in it day and night; finding itſelf never without, but ſtill under the law to Chriſt in every thing. And indeed how can a man do any thing aright without the ſenſe and knowledge of the law? How can a man fight aright with his ſpiritual enemies without underſtanding the law of fighting? For there is a lawful fighting, and an unlawful fighting, againſt the ſoul's enemies. The unlawful fighting is in the ſelf-will, wiſdom, and ſtrength, according to one's own apprehenſions and conceivings, which gains no real ground; and therefore they that ſo fight cannot overcome. The lawful fighting is in the faith, in the wiſdom and guidance of the Lord, in his Spirit and power, and this is ever ſucceſsful. So there is a lawful running, and an unlawful running the race, which the apoſtle plainly implieth, when he ſaith, "So run that ye may obtain," 1 Cor. ix. 24. So likewiſe there is a law of prayer, a law of faith, a law of love, a law of new obedience, a law of liberty, (for the liberty under the goſpel is not boundleſs, but bounded by the Spirit) a royal law, which the King of glory writes, and keeps living in the heart; by which his will is underſtood, and the way of life known, which never can be underſtood by any but thoſe in whom this law is written, even the law of the new covenant, the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus.

Read and conſider this ſeriouſly: for indeed it contains the very myſtery of Chriſtianity and redemption. For redemption is not by a notional knowledge of Chriſt, (it is not ſo witneſſed by any) but by receiving and ſubjecting to the law of his Spirit. And mind and

and wait to know and understand whether this be not the law which David speaks of, when he saith, Psal. xix. 7, &c. "The law of the Lord is perfect, convert-"ing the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, "making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord "are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment "of the Lord pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear "of the Lord clean, enduring for ever; the judg-"ments of the Lord truth, altogether righteous." Certainly the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is all this, containing in it the commandment which is life everlasting, and the sure testimony, and all the holy statutes, judgments, and fear, which the soul need to learn; and is indeed perfect, and able to convert and instruct perfectly the converted soul. And here the scripture is fulfilled under this holy law of the Spirit and power of life, "They shall not teach "every man his neighbour, and every man his bro-"ther, saying, Know the Lord" (they shall not do so in this covenant, under this ministration, which is a ministration not of the letter, but of the Spirit); "for they shall all know me, from the least of them "to the greatest of them," by the teachings of my own Spirit, by my writing my law in their hearts, by my holy unction, which shall teach my children, my anointed-ones, all that they need to know, 1 John ii. 27. Jer. xxxi. and Heb. viii.

Come, be not deceived about the new covenant; but wait to find the entrance thereinto, and to feel the virtue thereof, and to know and receive the law and power thereof, as becometh Christians.

XII. *Con-*

XII.

Concerning God's gathering us Home to himſelf, who are a People deſpiſed and rejected of Men, and in Scorn by them called QUAKERS.

IT pleaſed the Lord, who is rich in mercy and goodneſs, to pity our wanderings and ſore diſtreſſes, and at length to gather us home to the light and Spirit of his Son, which was the goſpel-ſtandard in the apoſtles days.

Now that by which God gathered us was the power of Chriſt, and the preaching of the everlaſting goſpel by the miniſtry which he hath raiſed up in theſe latter days. For as the Lord raiſed up a miniſtry to preach it at firſt, when he had ſome of the Jews and many of the Gentiles to gather; ſo he hath raiſed up a miniſtry to preach it again after the apoſtaſy, that he may cauſe the ſound thereof to go through all nations. And this miniſtry hath been raiſed to go forth in the ſame virtue, power, and Spirit wherein the foregoing miniſtry was ſent.

God promiſed of old, that he would ſeek after, ſearch out, and gather home, his ſcattered ſheep himſelf, and become their Shepherd, Ezek. xxxiv. Now this was fulfilled in a great meaſure in the days of Chriſt and his apoſtles, when Chriſt came himſelf, and alſo ſent his apoſtles after him, to ſeek and gather the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael; and not only ſo, but alſo to preach the goſpel to all nations, that he might be God's ſalvation to the ends of the earth, gathering and ſaving loſt and ſcattered ſouls out of every quarter and corner thereof.

But afterwards (after the ſpreading of the goſpel, and Chriſt's gathering of many thereby) there was a great apoſtaſy, and ſcattering from this holy ſtandard of life and ſalvation, and darkneſs overſpread the nations again, and an antichriſtian reign and kingdom got up, under a form and forms of godlineſs, without the

the life and power; in which forms people generally have been ſcattered from the life and power, which indeed is the goſpel.

Now, in this cloudy and dark time, great hath been the loſs and diſtreſs of the poor hungry ſheep; their ſhepherds and watchmen not being able to preach the goſpel diſtinctly to them, and direct their minds to the Spirit and power which ſaves: therefore God, in pity to this ſad and loſt condition of his ſheep, ſends his angel to preach his everlaſting goſpel to "them that "that dwell on the earth; to every nation, kindred, "tongue, and people," Rev. xiv. 6.

Now as the former publiſhing of the goſpel began at the ſcattered Jews, who were God's people under the law; ſo this begins at the ſcattered Chriſtians, who had ſome true deſires, and had been ſeeking after the Lord, (from mountain to hill, and hill to mountain) but could by no means find him; nor by any of the watchmen hear any certain news of their ſouls beloved. But the Lord, in his tender love and rich mercy, in the appointed time, ſends forth the Shepherd of Iſrael to ſeek and find them out. And, bleſſed be the Lord, he ſought them effectually, and hath found out many, and perſuaded them to follow him; and hath brought their weary ſouls home to their proper reſting-place, where they dwell under the care of the Shepherd and Biſhop of their ſouls.

But if any ſhall yet further enquire, *How, and by whom, the goſpel was preached unto us?* My anſwer is, *By the Shepherd himſelf.* God himſelf gave forth the ſound, and great hath been the company of them that publiſhed it; and our ears and hearts were opened by the Lord to hear the ſound, and know the Shepherd's voice.

And mind my words (which the Spirit of the Lord is now uttering forth through me; for they are words of truth, and certain underſtanding): they that do not hear and own the ſound thereof now, (from this miniſtry which the Lord hath now choſen, and ſent forth) would not have heard nor owned the ſound thereof in Chriſt's

Chriſt's and his apoſtles days, had they lived therein; but have reproached and oppoſed them, had they lived then in thoſe days, as they do now in theſe days. For of a truth it is the voice and ſound of one and the ſame Spirit and wiſdom; and they that do deſpiſe the one, would have deſpiſed the other, had they lived in the day of the appearance and manifeſtation thereof.

And then, for the manner of its preaching, it was juſt ſuch as is deſcribed, ver. 7. of Rev. xiv. For we are commanded to "fear God, and give glory to "him, becauſe the hour of his judgment" (the great and terrible day of the Lord) "was come;" and therefore to leave off all falſe ways and worſhips, and learn to worſhip the living God, the Creator of all, in Spirit and in truth. And truly it was a terrible day to the man of ſin in us; for the judgments of God were revealed againſt him, and we in fear lay under the judgment, that we might learn righteouſneſs, and witneſs the redemption of Sion thereby.

Now being thus turned to that light, and Spirit, and power, which judgeth, it wrought effectually in us againſt the darkneſs and power of Satan; ſearching, trying, manifeſting, judging the ſecrets of our hearts daily. It tried all our knowledge, all our faith, all our deſires, all our thoughts, words, ways, and worſhips; ſo that all things were naked and open before him with whom we had to do; and what had gone before, as glorious and taking in our eyes, was now manifeſted to be loathſome and abominable in the ſight of God. For indeed the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and every plant which the heavenly Father had not planted was he now plucking up, that they might no longer cumber the ground; but he might have room for his own ſeeds and plants of holineſs and righteouſneſs, which he was ready to ſow in his own garden.

And ſo at length we came to witneſs (abiding the trial of this dreadful day, wherein our God appeared to us as a conſuming fire) a new heaven and a new earth inwardly; and no more ſea of wickedneſs, no more

more ſea of inward trouble; but righteouſneſs, peace, and joy inwardly; and our God becoming a rich portion to us, watching over us in moſt tender care and love, and delighting in us to do us good, making known to us the riches of the goſpel, even the feaſt of fat things; and giving us to partake of the well or fountain of living waters in our own hearts, which ſprings up freſhly in us daily unto life eternal. So that we were not only invited to the waters, but taught alſo to come thereto: and when we came, we were not ſent away empty, but had the water of life given us; which became ſuch a well, as out of it flow ſtreams of living water. Ah! bleſſed be the Lord! Did we ever think, in our dry, dead, barren eſtate, to have ſeen ſuch a day as this?

And all this we met with in the way of ſelf-denial, and taking up the croſs; in denying our own wiſdom, our own knowledge, our own faith, our own righteouſneſs, and all that we could call our own; and owning a little ſeed of light and life eternal, even the ſeed of the everlaſting kingdom, which the Shepherd of Iſrael diſcovered to us, and helped us to ſearch after, and taught us how to find; which was indeed in a way very deſpiſeable, even to the eye of our own wiſdom. For thus it was:

We had been long looking out abroad, ſearching very diligently the ſcriptures, and other ſerious books, for great, full, certain, and undoubted wiſdom and knowledge; but now we were directed to turn inwards (even thither where we thought no good was to be found) to mind the appearance of God there, the Spirit of God teſtifying to us (according to the ſcriptures of truth) that the kingdom was within; and there we were directed to ſearch for the leaſt of all ſeeds, and to mind the loweſt appearance thereof, which was its turning againſt ſin and darkneſs; and ſo by minding and obſerving that in us which turned againſt ſin and darkneſs, we came by degrees to find we had met with the pure, living, eternal Spirit; and by obſerving the movings, ſtirrings, guidings, directions, and law thereof,

of, we found, *ere we were aware*, that we had met with the law of the new covenant, the law of the Spirit of life, which had life and virtue in it, to enable us to do the holy will; and then our hearts rejoiced, being made truly ſenſible that we had found that which we had mourned after, and longed for all our days. And then we began to ſee our way more clearly, and to wait on our God for his teachings, and to follow the Lamb, our leader, with joy and comfort. For indeed this experience greatly ſettled our ſpirits; knowing aſſuredly, that as none but Chriſt could do thoſe works outwardly which he did in the days of his fleſh; ſo none beneath his Spirit could do theſe works inwardly, enlighten inwardly, enliven inwardly, bind up and heal inwardly, open the inward eye, the inward ear, the cloſed heart, and looſen the dumb tongue, ſo as the touch of his power, and virtue of his life and holy preſence among us, hath done very frequently and livingly.

And now is this teſtimony nothing to you, O ye profeſſors, that we have found him by God's holy guidance (or rather have been found by him) whom we could never find in your ways and gatherings? But ſtill that which God hath quickened in us was there unſatisfied, weary, panting, and gaſping, for want of, and after, the breath of life.

Oh! come and ſee if this be not he indeed! Wait to feel the cloſing of that eye which cannot ſee (which God hath ordained ſhall never ſee), and for his opening the eye which is as yet blind in you (to which he giveth the true ſight), that ye periſh not from the way of life, through miſtakes and deceits from the miſts of darkneſs, which are yet over all who have not ſeen the light of God's day. To the law and to the teſtimony (to the inward law, and inward teſtimony, if ye be inward Jews; for the law inwardly written is light, even the light of the living, and the teſtimony of Jeſus is the Spirit of prophecy); for he that knoweth not theſe, nor walketh according to theſe, nor

ſpeaketh according to this Word, it is becauſe there is as yet no morning in him.

Oh! come to the morning light of the everlaſting day! Come to the Son's light, to the Son's Spirit! Wait for the dawning of the day of righteouſneſs, love, and peace, and for the ariſing of the day-ſtar. COME, DIE TO YOUR OWN WISDOM (it was the word livingly ſpoken to me, and entered my ſoul when it was ſpoken; never departing from me, though I was long in learning it), and know what it is to ſuffer with Chriſt, that ye may alſo reign with him.

Ah! if that candle were lighted in you, which ye ſo much reproach and deſpiſe the light of, ye might ſee, that inſtead of ſuffering with Chriſt, that which is of Chriſt in you (the pure light, the pure life of his Spirit) ſuffers by you, and the worldly ſpirit lives (ſhall I add, and reigns) in you, under all your profeſſions, knowledge, faith, worſhips, duties, ordinances, as ye call them, who want the knowledge of the everlaſting ordinance, even of the Spirit and power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; which is the great ordinance and way of the goſpel! And he that is ſubject to this ordinance ſhall be ſaved; but he that miſſeth of this ſhall periſh; let him ſearch the ſcriptures, and practiſe according to what he apprehends therefrom, as exactly as he can, without this Spirit and power.

XIII.

A few Words concerning the Worſhip which our God hath taught us.

OUR worſhip is a deep exerciſe of our ſpirits before the Lord, which doth not conſiſt in an exerciſing the natural part or natural mind, either to hear or ſpeak words, or in praying according to what we, of ourſelves, can apprehend or comprehend concerning our needs; but we wait, in ſilence of the fleſhly part, to hear with the new ear, what God ſhall

pleaſe

pleaſe to ſpeak inwardly in our own hearts, or outwardly through others, who ſpeak with the new tongue, which he unlooſeth, and teacheth to ſpeak; and we pray in the Spirit, and with the new underſtanding, as God pleaſeth to quicken, draw forth, and open our hearts towards himſelf.

Thus our minds being gathered into the meaſure, or gift of grace, which is by Jeſus Chriſt; here we appear before our God, and here our God, and his Chriſt, is witneſſed in the midſt of us.

This is that gathering in the name, which the promiſe is to, where we meet together, waiting with one conſent on the Father of life, bowing and confeſſing to him in the name of his Son; and that fleſhly part, that fleſhly underſtanding, that fleſhly wiſdom, that fleſhly will, which will not bow, is chained down, and kept under by the power of life, which God ſtretcheth forth over it, and ſubdueth it by. So then, there is the ſweet communion enjoyed, the ſweet love flowing, the ſweet peace of ſpirit reaped, which the Father breathes upon, and gives to his children; the ſweet joy and refreſhment in the Lord our righteouſneſs, who cauſeth the righteouſneſs to drop down from heaven, and truth to ſpring up out of the earth. And ſo our Father is felt bleſſing us, bleſſing our land, bleſſing our habitations, delighting in us, and over us to do us good; and our land yields its increaſe to the Lord of life, who hath redeemed it, and planted the precious plants and ſeeds of life in it.

THE CONCLUSION.

NOW this ought to be the great care of every renewed mind, even to keep out that which is unclean. The enemy will be aſſaulting, tempting, caſting into the mind that which is unclean; but the pure, chaſte mind will not entertain or touch it, but withdraw and retire from it into the place of ſafety, into the ſtrong tower of defence, from all the aſſaults and annoyances of the enemy. Such the Lord receiveth, ſuch the Lord delighteth in as his dear children, and in every reſpect carrieth himſelf as a Father to; and this is a precious ſtate truly to enjoy.

Now, bleſſed be the Lord, who hath revealed and beſtowed on his ſons and daughters, in theſe latter days, that light of his Holy Spirit, which ſearcheth the moſt inward parts, diſcovering every thing that is of a contrary nature to itſelf, turning and ſeparating the mind therefrom, and bringing the mind, heart, ſoul, and ſpirit under that, which is a croſs and yoke to it, and hath power from God to crucify and ſubdue it; that ſo life and immortality may be brought to light, and reign in the heart; and death and uncleanneſs be ſwallowed up in victory. For this is the intent of the goſpel, and of Chriſt's appearance, even to deſtroy ſin, and bring up the holy ſeed, and eſtabliſh the law of the new covenant, the law of love, the law of life, righteouſneſs, and holineſs, in which the renewed ſhould walk before the Lord all their days.

And God forbid, but that the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt (which is the power of God unto ſalvation), ſhould

ſhould attain its end, and the will of God be fulfilled; which is the ſanctification of his people in ſoul, body, and ſpirit; that they may be wholly leavened with the leaven of his kingdom, and become a new lump to him.

The Lord bring this to paſs in the hearts of the children of men, bringing down all religions which have not the true virtue in them; and propagate and eſtabliſh the religion more and more, which ſtands in the evidence, demonſtration, virtue, and power of his own Spirit; that men may be redeemed out of, and preſerved from, deceit, in matters of religion, wherein the eternal condition of their ſouls is ſo deeply concerned! Amen.

A

QUESTION ANSWERED

CONCERNING

Reading the SCRIPTURES aright.

QUESTION.

How may a Man know, whether he readeth the Scriptures to his Advantage and Benefit? Or whether he readeth them to his Diſadvantage or Hurt?

THAT the holy ſcriptures, written by men inſpired by God's Spirit, were of great uſe and benefit to thoſe to whom they were written (they rightly underſtanding them, and becoming ſubject to the voice of God's Spirit in thoſe that wrote or ſpoke them) is an undeniable truth.

And that they were not only written for them, but for others alſo, in future ages, who alſo may reap benefit in the reading of them; this is as manifeſt.

Yet that men may ſo read them, as not to underſtand them aright, but miſapply them to their own hurt; that is true alſo, and hath been often, and is ſtill evidenced by lamentable experience.

The Jews, the Scribes and Phariſees, heard and read the law and prophets to their hurt; ſome in a ſpirit of

of direct oppoſition to the truths and will of God, held out by the prophets; others in a ſpirit of miſunderſtanding.

Thus the Scribes and Phariſees, in Chriſt's time, ſo read the words of Moſes and the prophets (who teſtified concerning the Son, and his coming, as that thereby they became ſtrong, wiſe, and confident, in oppoſing him when he came. They thought they could prove by ſcriptures, that *this* was not, could not be He: he was to be a glorious King, and to reſtore Iſrael. This was a mean man, a carpenter's ſon; and ſo taught, and ſo behaved himſelf, that if men *believed in him, the Romans would thereby be provoked to deſtroy their place and nation.* He was an eater, a drinker, a friend of publicans and ſinners, a frequent breaker of the ſabbath, a Galilean, &c. "And ſhall Chriſt come "out of Galilee? Search and look; for out of Galilee "ariſeth no prophet," John vii. 52. As if they had ſaid, can this be the Meſſiah, of whom the ſcriptures have ſo abundantly propheſied, who cometh out of Galilee, out of which the ſcriptures have not propheſied of ſo much as any prophet to ariſe? Thus they read the ſcriptures to their hurt.

And ſo afterwards, in the apoſtles days, men wreſted the words of the apoſtles, as they did alſo the other ſcriptures, to their own deſtruction.

And ſince, in the apoſtaſy from the apoſtles ſpirit, life, and doctrine, and the coming up of many ſects, heads, and horns; which of them have not ſo read the ſcriptures, as to confirm themſelves even in thoſe very doctrines and practices, which are directly contrary to the doctrines, practices, and ſpirit of the apoſtles?

Yea, ſince God's breaking the darkneſs of the night, and cauſing the light of his day again to ariſe, how do men read and underſtand ſcriptures? Even ſo as to oppoſe this light, life, ſpirit, and power, now it is again made manifeſt; thinking and judging its appearance now (according to their underſtanding of, and apprehenſions on the ſcriptures) to be as contrary

to its appearance in the apoſtles days, as the Scribes and Phariſees judged Chriſt's appearance in their days, to be different from, and contrary to, what the prophets had propheſied concerning the Meſſiah.

Therefore it is a matter of very great weight, for a man to know when he reads the ſcriptures aright, that his table (whereon he feeds, and by which food he hopes to live to God, and be accepted with him) become not his ſnare, and ſet him further off from God. For it is as true in this day, as it was in Chriſt's day; that publicans and harlots are nearer the kingdom, than thoſe who are in the ſpirit, wiſdom, and righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees; who have a knowledge, a belief, an hope, a zeal, &c. from a miſunderſtanding of the ſcriptures; for this is wrong in a myſtery of deceit, which is worſe in its nature, and more dangerous to the perſon in whom it is, and to the ſouls of others, than the deceit which is openly manifeſt.

Well then; Is it not worth the diligent enquiry, and waiting upon God to know, *What is the right reading of the ſcriptures*; *and whether a man ſo read them, as is to the benefit and profit of his ſoul, or to his loſs and detriment?* To come then to the Anſwer, which is as followeth.

Anſ. He that reads the ſcriptures in a true meaſure of life received from God, he reads them aright; and whenever he ſo readeth, it is to his benefit. He that readeth out of that, readeth to his hurt; that being then up in him, which miſunderſtands, miſapplies, and grows conceited, wiſe, and confident, according to the fleſh; and ſo he is thereby liable to, and in great danger of, ſetting up his interpretations, inſtead of the meaning of God's Spirit; and of condemning that which doth not aſſent and agree therewith, though it be ever ſo neceſſary and precious a truth of God, and ever ſo fully demonſtrated by his Spirit, to thoſe who are in the true faith and underſtanding.

The true birth is meek, tender, gentle, fearing before the Lord, waiting upon him, often crying to him,

him, that it may not be deceived, that a wrong thing get not up in it; that it receive not any thing for truth, but what he knoweth to be truth; and when the Lord pleaſeth to give the true knowledge, that it hold that knowledge of his truth in righteouſneſs, in his life, in his will, in his wiſdom, &c. But the wrong birth is not ſo, nor is its courſe thus; but that is ſubtil in ſearching and forming of things, and holding them in the ſubtilty, and drawing the wrong part in others to own and acknowledge that, which it repreſents and holds forth as truth.

There is a wiſdom in man, which is againſt God; which wiſdom oppoſeth the wiſdom of God two ways; either in a direct, oppoſite way, or in a ſecret, ſubtil, undermining way. Now no man can come to God, or truly underſtand or receive the things of God, but as this wiſdom comes to be confounded and deſtroyed in him, by the light and power of God. All its ſtrong holds, all its ſubtil imaginations, all its reaſonings and conſultings muſt be daſhed, and brought to nought, before the truth of God can have full place and power in the heart. Now in the true diſcovery of this wiſdom to man, and in his denial of it, watching againſt it, and turning to the other; he may wait upon God aright, receive the knowledge of the heavenly myſteries aright, read the ſcriptures aright, come to the true ſenſe, underſtanding, and experience of them; but at any time, ſo far as he is out of this, he is liable to the ſnare, to the miſunderſtanding of ſcriptures, and to the fleſhly confidence that ariſeth thereupon. So that, having taken up a miſunderſtanding of a ſcripture, or ſome ſcriptures; he will even boldly venture to ſpeak evil of the heavenly and ſpiritual dignities, which are of God, and the holy truths which are held forth by his holy miniſters; againſt the prophets in their day, againſt Chriſt and his apoſtles in their day, againſt the witneſſes in the times of the apoſtaſy, and againſt the angel (learn who that is) that is to preach the everlaſting goſpel again, after the apoſtaſy. Ah! how doth this wiſdom deſtroy

deſtroy and entangle; and how hath it deſtroyed and entangled many at this day, who think they are greatly for God in thoſe things and practices, wherein they are directly againſt him; and that they only oppoſe error, and a wrong ſpirit, when they are oppoſing his truth and his Holy Spirit! And it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe, while they judge and act from that which is wrong, and in that which is wrong. Now mark:

The Spirit, the truth, the life, the ſubſtance, is God's for ever; the unclean ſpirit cannot enter into it, the unclean womb cannot conceive of it, nor bring it forth; but the letter, the ſhell, the outward figure, the outward relations and deſcriptions of things; the other ſpirit, wiſdom, and nature in man may read, gueſs at, transform, receive, believe and build up with according to the fleſh. And here is the foundation and riſe of antichriſt and Babylon, among them who raiſe up a building, a knowledge, a faith, an hope, a church, a worſhip, duties, ordinances, juſtification, ſanctification, &c. in imitation of Sion. But they are not the thing itſelf, but falſe repreſentations of the thing; either ſuch as were invented by man, or ſuch as were once appointed, and made uſe of by the Spirit of the Lord. For there is little difference between inventing a new thing, and making uſe of an old thing, which once was of God, but is now underſtood, obſerved, and practiſed out of the ſenſe, light, and guidance of his ſpirit, in another ſpirit, and according to another wiſdom. Now this is not the right way of reformation, to wit, to return to outward (literal) things, which were practiſed by the Jews in their day, or by the former Chriſtians in their day; but to return to the Spirit that they were in, and to feel (in the true life and leadings thereof) what it teacheth and requireth to be obſerved and practiſed now. For there are things, whoſe value is not in themſelves, but in God's requiring of them; which the wrong ſpirit may get into, and the Lord may draw his people out of them (as he did out of the outward court, into the inward building or temple, by his light and Spirit within,

within, when he gave the outward court to the Gentiles, Rev. xi. 1. 8.) And he that is found in thoſe things, after God hath given them to the Gentiles, and drawn his people out of them, is not therein owned or accepted of God, though God may bear with him in the time of his ignorance; yet if he abide in them after the riſing of light, and its teſtimony, the Lord will not ſo bear with him; but will condemn him, and deal with him as a tranſgreſſor of that covenant, wherein life and peace with him is witneſſed.

Therefore, in all things that concern God, whether in reading the ſcriptures, praying, or obſerving any thing ye call duties and ordinances, oh! that ye would approve yourſelves Chriſtians indeed, waiting to know your guide and leader, and the true limits which are ſet by God; that ye may ſerve him in the true faith, Spirit, and underſtanding, even in that which God knoweth to be ſo, and not in that which ye may falſly account ſo! For mark; if ye be Chriſtians, are ye not in Chriſt, and is not Chriſt in you? And are ye not to feel his life, and the guidance of his Spirit, ſo as ye may live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, read in the Spirit, pray always in the Spirit, believe in the Spirit, worſhip in the Spirit, and in the holy underſtanding of his truth, which is of him?

He that would be right in religion, muſt have a right beginning. How is that? He muſt begin in the Spirit: his knowledge, his faith, his hope, his peace, his joy, his righteouſneſs, his holineſs, his worſhip, &c. muſt begin there. He muſt come out of his own ſpirit, his own wiſdom, the counſels and thoughts of his own heart; and wait on him, who beginneth the work of regeneration and life in the heart.

And he muſt afterwards diligently watch againſt that ſpirit and wiſdom, from which the Lord hath led him, that it at no time again enter him; for it will be ſtriving to lead him out of the way, with likeneſſes, and falſe images of things, with knowledge falſly ſo called, with a faith which is not truly of God, nor of the ſame nature with that which he firſt felt; with falſe

falſe hopes, falſe fears, falſe joys, a falſe righteouſneſs and holineſs, which are not Chriſt's, nor according to the ſcriptures; but only ſuch as he apprehends to be ſo. For a man, who once taſted the truth, and in ſome meaſure judged aright, may afterwards err in his palate and judgment, and then take the wrong for the true, not keeping to that, nor being now in that, which formerly gave them the true reliſh.

Now, he that would meet with the true religion, the religion of the goſpel, muſt meet with the power, receive the power, believe, dwell, and act in the power. For Chriſt was made a king, prieſt, and prophet, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, "but after the power of an endleſs life:" and his covenant is not like the old, in word or letter; but in the ſame power and life wherein the prieſts were made miniſters.

So the knowledge here, the faith here, the hope here, &c. are not literal, but living. He that receiveth this knowledge, receiveth living knowledge. This faith gives victory over unbelief, and over that ſpirit whoſe ſtrength lies in unbelief. This hope purifies the heart even as he is pure. And he that receiveth the righteouſneſs of this covenant, receiveth a living garment, which hath power in it over death and unrighteouſneſs. The beginning of this religion, of this power and holy inward covenant, is ſweet; but the pure progreſs and going on of it much more pleaſant, as the Lord gives to feel the growth and ſweet living freſhneſs of it; notwithſtanding the temptations, fears, troubles, trials, oppoſitions, and great dangers, both within and without, which the life (which was at firſt turned to) being ſtill kept to, by the power which is from it, and through the faith which is in it, in its own ſeaſons and way of its own wiſdom overcomes, giving the ſoul that is diligent and faithful to witneſs, that *all its ways are pleaſantneſs, and its paths peace*; yea, the very *yoke is eaſy, and the burden light*, when the mind and will is changed by the power, and helped and aſſiſted by the Lord in its ſubjection to the power.

So

So the Lord God of tender mercies (who pitieth the miſerable and erring out of the way, eſpecially thoſe in whom he hath begot deſires after himſelf) remove the ſtumbling-blocks, and lead the wandering Jews (who are entangled in their own thoughts and reaſonings about the letter) into that which is of himſelf in them, which is Spirit and life, and was before the letter, and excels the letter (with its diſpenſation) in glory; and is to remain (after the letter) the reſt, joy, life, peace, and portion of the ſoul for ever and ever. So honour the letter, in believing its teſtimony concerning Chriſt, who is the Shepherd (to whom the Sheep are to be gathered) the way, the truth, the life itſelf, to whom the ſoul is to come, and on whom the ſoul is to wait for life; and having received life from him, to dwell, abide, and grow up in him, who is the life; and not go backward into any thing that is literal, or without life, nor to glory in the knowledge, or literal deſcriptions of things; but forward, into the ſpiritual, heavenly diſpenſation of life and power. The law was letter; the goſpel is life and power: the law was a ſhadow of good things to come; but the goſpel is the ſubſtance, the life, the virtue, the Spirit of what the law ſhadowed out. From hence the Chriſtian is to ſpring; the Jeruſalem from above is to be its mother, the Holy Spirit its begetter. And becauſe here the ſtate of true ſonſhip is witneſſed, therefore God pours out the Spirit of his Son upon theſe; and then the Spirit being received, which is above the letter, a life is to be felt and lived in beyond words, even that which the good words lead to, and end in.

And here the truth, ſweetneſs, and fulneſs of words is known, felt, and witneſſed, even in that which comprehends them, and gives them their due weight and meaſure. Nor can any poſſibly underſtand the words of the Spirit, but he that is in the Spirit; and then he knows the place of the words, which came from the Spirit, and of the Spirit from whom the words came. And this is precious; but not to be witneſſed by the wiſe diſputer, but by the ſerious traveller,

veller, who firſt is broken and daſhed to pieces in his own wiſdom, and then afterwards healed, led, and guided by the eternal Spirit of wiſdom, which is the ſure and unerring guide.

The Spirit of God knoweth the things of God, and the ſtates of perſons, and what is proper or improper for them: he knew what was proper for the Jews under the law and prophets, what was proper for them in Egypt, what in the wilderneſs, what in Canaan, and what in their ſeveral diſperſions and captivities; for the diſciples, in the days of Chriſt's appearance in fleſh, for the churches in the days of the apoſtles, for the witneſſes and mourners in the times of the apoſtaſy, and for thoſe who by his power are raiſed up, and delivered out of the apoſtaſy.

And the Spirit of the Lord doth not only know the ſtate thus in general, but likewiſe every ſoul's particular ſtate, and how to apply things to its ſtate. There are ſome newly quickened, newly come out of the darkneſs. There are ſeveral ſtates and degrees of growth; there is a tempted ſtate, a wandering ſtate, a backſliding ſtate, a ſhaken ſtate, an eſtabliſhed ſtate, &c. Now there is ſomewhat proper to every one according to his ſtate, which the Spirit of the Lord knows; and thoſe who are called out by him, to miniſter in his name and power, know alſo, as his Spirit pleaſeth to teach them, and make manifeſt to them. All truths are not proper to every ſtate, nor all remedies to every diſeaſe. Chriſt had many things to teach and ſay to his diſciples, which they were not able to bear; and a man in reading the ſcriptures, though he ſhould underſtand the truth of what he reads, yet he is apt to miſapply things, as to himſelf or others, unleſs the Lord guide and help him. He is apt to apply that to him, which belongs not to him, and thruſt that from him, which belongs to him.

Thus may a man eaſily err and wander, from error to error, and toil and wear out himſelf in his ſeveral apprehenſions, ways, and practices (thinking he doth as he ought, and as God requires of him, according to the

the ſcriptures) and yet his mind be from that, and his underſtanding out of that, which opens the ſcriptures aright, and gives the right uſe of them.

Therefore wait on the Lord to feel quickenings from him, through a meaſure of his life revealed, and the mind gathered into, and purged thereby; and then wait for the Spirit's appearing to thee in this meaſure; further quickening, purifying, guiding thee, and manifeſting his truth therein to thee, according as he ſees thy need, eſtate, and condition to require.

And thus thou wilt be like a child, living not upon a wiſdom of thy own, but upon thy Father's wiſdom, and not gathering a knowledge according to thy own will, and into thy own comprehenſion; but receiving it as a gift daily from the hands of the Father, and ſo thou ſhalt always have it freſh and living, and ſafe for thy uſe; whereas that, whilſt thou keepeſt in thy comprehenſion, and canſt run to when thou liſteſt, and make uſe of when thou liſteſt, putrifies, and yields but corrupt nouriſhment, feeding not the living, but the dead in thee; and ſo thy very knowledge corrupts thy mind, and brings it into death; and thou haſt only ſuch a knowledge as may be held in the dead part, and ſo liveſt and walkeſt as man may live and walk, without the pure life and preſence of God.

So this is the anſwer which was in my heart (and indeed ſprang up in me, as the queſtion was laid before me in ſpirit). In the true meaſure of life, which is from God, and one with him, the ſcriptures are rightly read and underſtood, in the will of God, by him that doth it in the holy underſtanding which comes from him: not in a man's own will or underſtanding; for he cannot underſtand what ſcriptures he will, or when he will, or as he will; but he muſt wait on him who hath the key, who underſtandeth what is fit and proper for him, to know, or not to know; and ſo openeth or ſhutteth in his eternal pleaſure, and according to his eternal wiſdom; and what he openeth to thee, that is proper for thee to know; and

and what he ſhutteth from thee, that is proper for thee (as yet) not to know; but to wait the times and ſeaſons of things, which are in the Father's hand. And ſo, what the Lord reveals not to thee, that is yet a ſecret with him, as to thee; but what he reveals to thee, that is thine in his fear and counſel to feed on, and make uſe of.

So here, in gathering of life, in the holy building, there is a holy order and wiſdom from the Moſt High, wherein every one waits on the Maſter, on the Lord, on the Shepherd, on the Father of Spirits, and receives from his hand, what is proper to his ſtate. And ſo all hold the head, and live by the life, virtue, and teaching that comes from the head. And there is one God who is over all, and one Chriſt in whom all are, and one Spirit of life in which all are baptized and joined together. And every one as he ſprings from this life, and feels the union, virtue, and fellowſhip thereof, ſo abiding here, he is in his place and ſervice, beloved of the Lord and Father of all, and felt by the life in all, in the unity of the body; and ſo cheriſhed and helped forward in the love and Spirit, wherein the body is knit to the head; yea, whatever his ſtate be, (whether a ſtate of mourning, or temptation, or deep diſtreſs; or a ſtate of joy, rejoicing, and peace) yet abiding and waiting on the Lord, he is felt, received, owned, and dearly beloved in the Lord.

A few Words to ſuch as complain for Want of Power.

BE ſure ye receive Chriſt; for he is the ſame that ever he was. "To as many as received him, to "them gave he power" (not only to ſtand againſt ſin, but) "to become the ſons of God;" he did ſo formerly, and he doth ſo ſtill. And they that are true Jews, born after the Spirit, truly circumciſed, and are indeed come to Mount Sion, and the heavenly Jeruſalem inwardly; feed on God's holy mountain, and dwell

dwell in his holy city, in the building that is from above, for the birth which is from above. There is no complaining in the ſtreets of this city, but what God requireth is performed; and what God promiſeth to his, is enjoyed there; according to the ſeveral ſtates and conditions of each, and according to the ability which is given in the new covenant, where God fulfilleth the good pleaſure of his goodneſs, and the work of faith with power, in the hearts of his daily. Everlaſting praiſes and honour to his name.

Oh! the precious name of Jeſus, in which the ſpirits of the redeemed meet, in which name is power; and he who is the arm and power of God, is in the midſt of them.

They who receive him who is the power, who is a ſpiritual vine and olive-tree to all his, who yields daily of the living ſap and virtue to them (wherein there is power); how can they want power? Or how can they but praiſe the Lord, who daily miniſters unto them of the power of the endleſs life? When the holy life and power ſprings, and is felt, praiſes to the Lord cannot but ſpring with it.

So that it concerns all people ſeriouſly to conſider, whether the reaſon why they have not power, be not becauſe they do not receive Chriſt, who hath all power in heaven and earth given to him. For many talk of Chriſt, but few come to him in the Father's drawings; ſo will not receive him; like the Jews who waited for his appearance, and yet rejected him when he came.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOMEWHAT RELATING TO

CHURCH-GOVERNMENT,

WHEREIN THE

Neceſſity, Uſefulneſs, and Bleſſed Effects of the TRUE CHURCH-GOVERNMENT, are here and there hinted at; and this clearly manifeſted,

That the Authority and Power of CHRIST's Spirit in his Church, is no uſurped or Antichriſtian Authority, nor contrary to the True Light and Liberty of any particular Member, but a Cheriſher and Preſerver of it.

AS ALSO

REMARKS

Upon ſome Paſſages in a late Book, entitled, "Anti-"chriſt's Transformations within diſcovered by the "Light within."

WHEREIN THE

Antichriſtian TRANSFORMER is made manifeſt, and the LIGHT within cleared from his falſe Imputations and Pretences to it.

Written in Obedience to him that is True; who hath given a certain Teſtimony againſt him that is Falſe, to very many in this his Day; and, among others, to me alſo; whom he hath pleaſed to gather and own among his Children and Servants in Truth,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

"For God is not the Author of Confuſion, but of Peace, as in all Churches "of the Saints." 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

"For what have I to do, to judge them alſo that are without? Do not ye judge "them that are within?" 1 Cor. v. 12.

"The Government ſhall be upon his Shoulder, &c. Of the Increaſe of his "Government and Peace, no End," &c. Iſa. ix. 6, 7.

"Woe unto the World, becauſe of Offences; for it muſt needs be, that Offences "come; but woe to that Man, by whom the Offence cometh!" Matt. xviii. 7.

"For there muſt be alſo Hereſies among you; that they which are approved "may be made manifeſt among you." 1 Cor. xi. 19.

"Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall Men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe Things, to draw "away Diſciples after them." Acts xx. 30.

"For not he that commendeth himſelf is approved; but whom the Lord com-"mendeth." 2 Cor. x. 18.

THE PREFACE.

IT hath pleaſed God, in theſe our days, to cauſe his true light to ſhine forth out of darkneſs. Oh! everlaſtingly bleſſed be his name! He hath laid the foundation of life in many hearts, and gathered his once deſolate people into families and churches; and hath been with them, and is with them, dwelling among them, preſerving them, building up Sion more and more, and cauſing his glory more and more to appear therein. The living God hath made us a living people, and honoureth us with his living preſence, and with the daily manifeſtations of his pure power. Oh! glory, glory, is ſounded to him, in his own ſpringing life, in the hearts of his children, day by day.

But the enemy of God and his appearance, hath wrought againſt his power and work many ways, and hath endeavoured to ſtop the gathering to the light and building up, not only by outward force, but alſo by all the devices and myſterious workings he could invent. But bleſſed be the Lord, who hath appeared againſt them all, and preſerved his remnant from them all; though ſome that have not watched and lain low, but being ſoaring high, in that part where the ſnare is laid and takes, have ſtumbled and fallen. Yet truth ſtands, and the gathering in the truth ſtands; and the life which God hath raiſed, and to which he hath given dominion, reigns; and much is ſubdued, and the Lord is going on to ſubdue more and more under it daily, in the hearts of ſuch as ſenſibly and livingly, and not notionally and in a dead formal way, wait upon him and worſhip him.

Now, the foreſt and moſt miſchievous way of oppoſing truth, is by pretending to it. Who could more advantageouſly or readily betray Chriſt, than an apoſtle

of Chriſt? And who can be fitter to undermine the light, than he who in words cries it up, and yet is departed from it, and ſecretly fights againſt it, and would bring forth, propagate, and ſet up an hideous, monſtrous, comprehenſive kind of knowledge (which is contrary to it, and cannot conſiſt with it) in the name of it?

Ah! that this perſon, who now appears againſt the truth, and the church and miniſtry which is in and of the truth, were but what he pretends to be! For then I ſhould gladly have received his teſtimony, and not have been thus neceſſitated to appear againſt his ſpirit, and the dark work and teſtimonies thereof. He ſaith, there are two Chriſts, both the true Chriſt and antichriſt. I confeſs his work comes from one of them, even antichriſt, who would deſtroy Chriſt's work, kingdom, and building, and the miniſtry which he makes uſe of, both to plant, water, and build up; but not that from Chriſt, who hath gathered a church to himſelf, and is with the church which he hath gathered, and bleſſeth the church which he hath gathered, and owneth them in their aſſemblings, and in their miniſtering: which owning and teſtimony will ſtand; when the diſowning, and falſe teſtimonies of all theſe falſe apoſtate ſpirits, will fall, and end in their own ſorrow and miſery.

What I have here written, I have written in an holy conſtraint, in the opening and feeling life of truth, with true love to ſouls; yea, even of this very perſon, who is erred ſo exceedingly from the holy light and Spirit, and its holy teſtimony, and would fain exalt his critical conceits and notions, above the plain teſtimony and evidence of truth, in the hearts of God's choſen ones.

The Lord bring down the kingdom of darkneſs, and exalt his own kingdom in the hearts of the children of men more and more; and add to his church, and keep them in that which will never ſuffer them to depart from it; or to teſtify againſt the life, and power, and preſence of the Lord, manifeſted, dwelling, and ruling in it! Amen.

REMARKS

REMARKS

Upon ſome Paſſages in a late Book, entitled

Antichriſt's Tranformations Within, &c.

THE firſt thing that I ſhall obſerve is, *That he doth deny that man hath any rule, power, dominion, government, or authority, either given or committed to him from the Lord, as pertaining to the conſcience in things relating to the worſhip of God.*

Remark. God ſent Chriſt into the world, and he gave him power and authority in his name to do whatever he required of him. And Chriſt ſends his ſervants and miniſters into the world, as ſheep among wolves, and he gives them power and authority to do whatever he requires of them, and which he expects from them, and would have done by them. And their work relates to the conſcience, and to the worſhip of God; and their power and authority extends thither, where their work lies. They are ambaſſadors of Chriſt, and they have power and authority in Chriſt's ſtead to beſeech men to be reconciled to God. For as Chriſt came in his Father's name, to fulfil the work which the Father gave him to do, ſo they come in Chriſt's name, to fulfil the work which he gives them to do. They have power to feed the flock; they have power to watch over them; they have power to build up in that which is good; and they have power and authority to teſtify againſt and hammer down that which is evil; they have power to reprove; they have power and authority to viſit with a ſpirit of meekneſs, and power

to come with God's rod, yea, with his ſword, and to ſmite that with it which riſeth up againſt the truth, againſt the life, againſt the Spirit, againſt the holy way and work of the Lord, and holy order and government of his truth and Spirit.

That Chriſt hath ſent forth his ſervants, his miniſters, his ambaſſadors, about things relating to the conſcience, is ſo manifeſt, that it cannot be denied. But that he hath ſent them forth with power and authority in things pertaining to the conſcience, relating to the worſhip of God, that this man denies; but all that have received the truth, hold the truth, and keep the truth, cannot but acknowledge it.

Now the reaſon he gives why he denies *man any rule, power, dominion, government, or authority, either given, or committed to him from the Lord, as pertaining to the conſcience in things relating to the worſhip of God, is becauſe it belongeth to Chriſt the light, the inviſible power which dwells in men and women, &c.*

Rem. All power in heaven and earth was given to Chriſt, and belongs to him; that is freely granted. But the queſtion is, whether he hath not given of this power to his children, and his ſervants and miniſters, as his Father gave of it unto him? Doth not he give power to as many as believe in his name to become ſons of God? Did not he make his apoſtles able miniſters of the new covenant, in the Spirit and power which he gave them? "All power is given me in hea-" ven and in earth," ſaid Chriſt, Mat. xxviii. 18. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations," &c. ver. 19.; but wait at Jeruſalem for the power firſt, Acts i. 8. So when the power came upon them, it led them forth in their work, and they had power to gather, and power to build up, and power to govern and watch over the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghoſt had made them overſeers, Acts xx. 28. And Paul ſpeaks of the power the Lord had given him to uſe ſharpneſs, even againſt thoſe in that church of Corinth, who would not be ſubject to him in that which he had received from the Lord, 2 Cor. xiii. 10. But this power

power was to edification, but not to deſtruction. For though he had power from Chriſt the Lord, and did by that Spirit, and in that power, deliver Hymeneus and Alexander unto Satan; yet it was not that they ſhould be deſtroyed by the devil, but that, by feeling themſelves out of the truth, and under the dominion of a wrong ſpirit, they might come to true ſenſe and underſtanding, and learn not to blaſpheme the truth, nor the dignities whom God hath made honourable in the truth, 1 Tim. i. 20. And not the apoſtle only, but the church of Corinth, had a ſhare in the ſame power; and therefore the apoſtle, knowing what was given and committed to them, exhorts them, that in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when they were gathered together, and his Spirit, with the power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to deliver ſuch an one to Satan: but this was not for deſtruction, to deſtroy the ſoul; but to bring it back into a ſtate of edification and ſalvation, which now, by departing from the truth, it was gone from. It was indeed for the deſtruction of the fleſh, but not of the ſpirit; but that the ſpirit might be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus, 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.

Secondly, The next thing I ſhall obſerve is this: he ſaith, *There is no glory to be given to man, although he be born of the light.*

Rem. That glory and honour is to be given to man, which God gives to man, who hath ſaid, "Them that "honour me, I will honour; and they that deſpiſe "me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed," 1 Sam. ii. 30. He that brings his deeds to the light, they being juſtified and approved there, he hath honour in the light. His deeds being made manifeſt that they are wrought in God, that is honour enough for him, John iii. 21. The children of light ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, and eternal life; and that glory and honour they have, and eternal life from God, Rom. ii. 7. They ſeek not the honour that is from men, but the honour that cometh from God only, John v. 44. the honour in the truth, in the life, in the power, which God

God gives them in the hearts of all that are truly ſenſible and living. For honouring the Lord and his truth, how can I but honour thoſe that are honourable in his eye, and who are glorious in his truth! For indeed the children of light, the tender, the humble, the contrite and broken-hearted ones, are glorious in his eye, and the Lord doth exalt them in due time; for after the true humility, and in the true humility, they come to partake of the true honour, 1 Pet. v. 5, 6. And ſo every true Jew, every true ſervant, every faithful ſteward, every true miniſter, that is faithful in the uſe of his gift and talent, hath praiſe of God, Rom. ii. 29.; and they that are of God, honour thoſe whom God honours, glorifying the Lord for them, and honouring them in the Lord, 2 Cor. viii. 18. Oh! how could this man ſay, there is no glory to be given to man, though he be born of the light, when as "the King's daughter is all glorious "within," and man in that birth is nothing but glorious in the eye of the Lord! Man, having ſinned, fell ſhort of the glory of God; but coming out of ſin, cometh into the glory again, and is daily more and more changed into the glorious image of the Son, from glory to glory, &c. 2 Cor. iii. 18. The aim of God is to bring many ſons to glory, Heb. ii. 10.; and as they come out of darkneſs and ſin into light and holineſs, they come into the glory, and are in the glory. Is it not their glory in the Lord, and in his light, to be owned and acknowledged by them that are one with them in the ſame light? They who love God, and honour God, cannot but love them, and honour them, who are begotten by him, and who are in an eſpecial manner made uſe of by him in his ſervice, for the good of ſouls, and for the preſervation and building up of the church. The apoſtle ſpeaks of double honour to be given to the elders that rule well, eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine, and would (from the Spirit of God) have them counted worthy of it, 1 Tim. v. 17. How far is this man from the apoſtle's mind, who would have no glory given

given to any man, no not to the children of light, nor miniſters in the light, who in the apoſtles days were the glory of Chriſt! 2 Cor. viii. 23. Yea, the juſt that live by faith in Chriſt, and are gathered by him out of Satan's kingdom into his ſpiritual kingdom, and walk in the light, as God is in the light, there light doth ſhine in them, and they do ſhine as the ſun in the firmament; and they that are honoured by the Lord to turn many to righteouſneſs, do ſhine as ſtars: and though one ſtar differs from another in glory; yet all that come into the true nature and heavenly image of the Son, do come into a meaſure of the true glory, and have ſome of the glory given them which God gave to Chriſt; and in that are glorious, partaking of his Spirit, kingdom, power, and holy dominion over ſin and Satan, all which is truly glorious, John xvii. 22.

Thirdly, The third thing I ſhall obſerve is this: he ſaith, *All is to be given to Chriſt, the light in man, unto whom alone it doth belong, who is the true Miniſter, and hath power in himſelf to teach all the ſons and daughters of men, &c.*

Rem. That Chriſt is the true Miniſter, that is not denied; but doth not Chriſt, who is the true Miniſter in the power of the endleſs life, ſend forth diſciples and ambaſſadors in the ſame power, and make them, through his Spirit and power, able miniſters of the New Teſtament? And they that hear them, do they not hear Chriſt? And they that deſpiſe or deny them, do they not deſpiſe or deny Chriſt? And doth not Chriſt ſay to the ſeventy diſciples, "He that heareth "you, heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth "me; and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that "ſent me?" Luke x. 16. It is antichriſt that ſo vainly pretends to ſet up Chriſt, or his light, or Spirit, or power, as to deny thoſe that are ſent of him, and miniſter in his name. As man is in the fall, he is corrupt, and his works are out of God, and he is there to be denied, ceaſed from, and not accounted of; but in the reſtoration, in union and fellowſhip with the Lord,

Lord, he is a worker together with God, and is there to be owned, and hath a ſhare in miniſtring out of the heavenly treaſure that dwells in him. So Chriſt was the great Miniſter, who had the fulneſs; and they that have gifts from him for the work of the miniſtry, and who miniſter in and from the gift, and in that are able and faithful, are eſteemed and accounted as miniſters by him. So ſaith the apoſtle, "As every man "hath received the gift, even ſo miniſter the ſame "one to another, as good ſtewards of the manifold "grace of God. If any man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as "the oracles of God; if any man miniſter, let him "do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God "in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt, "to whom be praiſe and dominion for ever and ever, "Amen," 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. And Paul ſaith, he was made a miniſter of the goſpel according to the gift of the grace of Gd given unto him, by the effectual working of his power, Epheſ. iii. 7. Now the gift is given, not to thoſe that are wiſe after the fleſh (unleſs that wiſdom is firſt broken); but to ſuch as are mean, poor, weak, low, or ſome way or other contemptible in the eye of man's wiſdom, and eaſy to be diſregarded and deſpiſed by men. Yea, it is hard to deſpiſe the man whom God ſends, without deſpiſing his gift in him; and the gift cannot be deſpiſed or rejected, without deſpiſing or rejecting him that gave it; as the apoſtle told the church of the Theſſalonians, he that deſpiſed or rejected, deſpiſed or rejected not man, but God, (who gives his Holy Spirit to them whom he ſends forth to miniſter in his name) 1 Theſſ. iv. 8. He had been beſeeching and exhorting the brethren by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that as they had received of them how they ought to walk, and to pleaſe God, ſo they would abound more and more. "For ye know," ſaid he, "what commandments we "gave you by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt." Mark: the apoſtle did not only turn them to the word of life and power in themſelves; but did give them commandments from the word of life in him, and they received

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of them whom Chriſt ſent forth, how they ought to walk, &c. ver. 1, 2. And life hath not loſt any of its authority; but the power may teach and command others through any veſſel when it pleaſeth; and they that are the true ſheep, know the voice of the true Shepherd, ſpeaking either in their own hearts, or through any other inſtrument unto them. And the voice of wiſdom in any, is in every age ſtill heard and juſtified of her children; and he that is of God heareth his voice, in thoſe whom he ſends in this age, as well as in former ages; and he that is not of God heareth not his voice; and hereby the Spirit of truth and ſpirit of error is known in this, as well as in former ages, 1 John iv. 6.

Fourthly, The fourth paſſage I ſhall take notice of, is in theſe words: *Wherefore*, ſaid he, *whoſoever doth exalt Chriſt the light, who is the true Miniſter, before themſelves, by Chriſt the light within ſhall thoſe be exalted.*

Rem. This is very different from what went before: for before he denied all glory and exaltation at all to man, although he be born of the light; here he ſpeaks of exalting Chriſt, the true Miniſter, before themſelves; which doubtleſs every true miniſter, and every child of light, cannot but do; and herein he confeſſeth they ſhall be exalted by Chriſt the light. Then glory is given to them; and he that ſees them thus exalted by the light, cannot but eſteem them, as ſo honoured and exalted by Chriſt, and give them that glory which Chriſt hath given them. And happy would it be with this man, could he ſee the true church, which God hath brought out of the wilderneſs, and beautified and gloriouſly built up to a great height; and the elders and miniſters whom he preſerveth, and is with, and makes uſe of in his ſervice, and give them in his heart the honour and glory which God had glorified them with. But that he cannot do, till he come out of Babylon, and out of that dark and confuſed ſpirit wherein he wrote theſe things, into that light and holy Spirit of truth, which diſcovers what they are, (to thoſe that are in the truth) and

and condemns the ground and root out of which they ſprang.

Fifthly, The next thing to be obſerved by me is this: *He layeth it down as his judgment, faith, and belief, that whatever is written* to the churches, ought to be written from God's infallible Spirit, and the Word of eternal life; wherein I am one with him: for what good can any thing do the living, but what comes from life, and from God's infallible Spirit, which alone is able rightly to exhort, adviſe, admoniſh, warn, and build up the ſpiritual? But his inference thereupon is that which is before me to take notice of. *Wherefore*, ſaith he, *your paper to the churches is not to be owned by the churches, inaſmuch as it was written from a ſight, or a ſenſe, and from the ſenſible part, and not in and from the Spirit of Revelation.*

Rem. God hath, in his holy church and living people, opened the eye that was once blind, and daily anointeth that eye, giving a true ſight, and in the ſpringings of life giveth a true ſenſe; and that which giveth this, is the Spirit of revelation; and what is written in this ſight and ſenſe, is written from the Spirit of revelation. And the called people of the Lord wait upon the Lord, that they may be kept in this ſight, ſenſe, and Spirit, in what they do at all times; but more eſpecially when they conſider of things relating to the churches, even to the welfare, holy order, and peace thereof, that God's Spirit may have its ſcope every where, and nothing elſe have place in the churches of Chriſt. And though every one be not an eye and ear-witneſs of what is to be conſidered of for the good of the churches; yet every one waits to feel things in the opening and ſpringing life, and in that to ſpeak, conſider, or write. I have often ſeen the carriage of things after this manner, to the joy of my heart, and cauſing of my ſoul livingly to bleſs the Lord for it; and therefore may I, yea, ought I, now thus to ſpeak this teſtimony, which the Lord hath livingly given me, being at this time required of me. Oh! that men knew the ſerioufneſs and ſolemnity of

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our ſpirits before the Lord, in our conſidering things relating to his church, and how we retire out of man's wiſdom (affectionate part, and comprehending part, as he ſpeaks) to feel the ſpringing life, and God's holy guidance there; and how the Lord doth ſatisfy and bleſs us with it! So that we can ſay, in truth and uprightneſs of heart, not we (as men) of ourſelves do things on truth's account; but he on whoſe ſhoulders God hath laid the government rules and reigns among us; and things are ordered by his counſel and wiſdom to his praiſe. And the peace and comfort of God's Spirit remains with us, in the midſt of all the reproaches and oppoſitions we meet with from that evil ſpirit, which envieth and oppoſeth us many ways. This one word more is with me, as to this particular: God hath given believers, his church, ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil; and thoſe ſenſes are not without the true life and Spirit, and every motion and action of them is in that life, and in that Spirit.

And whereas he further ſaith: *Whatſoever is written, declared, or given forth, in the ſight, or in the ſenſe, or from the ſenſible part, it is not to be owned; for the ſenſible part is that which hath been in the tranſgreſſion with the woman, &c.*

Rem. Herein he is greatly miſtaken: for friends in truth do not ſpeak, or write, or admoniſh, or reprove, or give warning from that part; but from the ſight and ſenſe which God gives to his own birth; and it is the Spirit of God that gives both the ſight and ſenſe, and ſpeaks through them; and thoſe whoſe ears are circumciſed and opened know the voice, and give glory to God, and are obedient to his Spirit, when it gives advice and warning through any; which thoſe that are in the comprehending part, and conſider and judge in that, cannot have the ſenſe of.

Sixthly, He ſaith, *Antichriſt will bring a veil over the underſtanding of men and women, and yet they, for the preſent, cannot perceive it.*

Rem. This is very true. I would he and others, who are veiled by antichriſt, did ſee it; for then he would

would not eſteem thoſe veiled whom the Lord hath unveiled, nor attribute theſe ſayings of his, and this his book, to the light within, which thoſe whom the Lord hath unveiled, and keepeth unveiled, in his pure Spirit and quickening life, know to have come from the darkneſs within, and not from the true light; but the true eye, in the truly living, ſees through it, and hath no union with it; but returns it back thither, from whence it came. Oh! how deeply doth antichriſt blind and deceive men; that that which is their own ſtate, they cannot ſee to be ſo! But apply it to others, whoſe ſtate it is not, and ſo juſtify themſelves in that wherein God condemns them, and condemn others in that wherein God juſtifieth them! This is ſad work, and will have a ſad iſſue!

Seventhly, He ſaith, *There is an inviſible woman in every viſible man, and there is an inviſible man in every viſible woman; and the man Chriſt Jeſus, who is the light of the world, he is in them both, &c.*

Rem. Is not he now in the notional and comprehending part, muddling himſelf and others (whoſe ears are open to him) about a woman in a man, and a man in a woman, and Chriſt in both? Whereas truth is a plain thing; which they that come to feel and abide in, feel and witneſs redemption, and preſervation out of the comprehending part, and the dead notional knowledge thereof.

Eighthly, He ſaith, *He doth not own the judgment and opinion of thoſe miniſters, nor yet their ſuperiority, who ſay, he that is not juſtified by the witneſs of God in friends, is condemned by it in himſelf.*

Rem. I ſhall not now argue that there are true miniſters, and that there is a true ſuperiority, (ſome being greater and ſome leſs in the covenant and life of truth) which every one that heareth and learneth of the Father, and ſo is taught of God, will own: but to the thing itſelf. The witneſs of God is but one in all, and it condemns nothing but what is not of God; and what his witneſs in another condemns in me, his witneſs

witneſs in me (whenever it ariſeth and ſpeaketh in me concerning that thing) cannot but condemn alſo.

It is true, as he ſaith, that *juſtification is by Chriſt alone, who is the head in every member.*

Rem. But Chriſt is in other members alſo, as well as in one; and his life hath power to judge and condemn; and it judgeth and condemneth no where, but that which is to be judged and condemned. So that wherever Chriſt's life in any judgeth and condemneth any thing, that is judged and condemned by Chriſt. And the ſaints have power and authority in Chriſt, not only to judge and condemn the world, but alſo to judge and condemn fallen angels and ſpirits. To what end are they bid to try the ſpirits, if after they have tried them, they may not judge and condemn what they find life and truth judging and condemning?

Ninthly, He excepts againſt that paſſage in friends paper, (as he recites it) *that none are to miniſter, but thoſe that are reconciled to the church, and have the approbation of the elders.*

Rem. What is the end of miniſtering, but to gather out of the world into the church, or to build up the church? And are they fit to do either, who are not reconciled to the church? Or whom the Spirit, life, and power in the church and elders hath not unity with?

He further ſaith, *That God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, and not to the church (ſaith he); he remembers no ſuch ſcripture.*

Rem. God added to the church ſuch as ſhould be ſaved; and were they not reconciled to it before they were added? And Chriſt ſaid, concerning that brother that would not hear the church, that he ſhould be looked upon as an heathen or a publican; and are ſuch as will not be reconciled to the church, nor hear it, allowed by God to miniſter, either to gather into the church, or to build up in it? Ah! ſurely it cannot be. There can be no true miniſtering out of the life and Spirit of the body, or church that is in God. And all ſuch as have thus gone out from God, in

whom the church is, have miniſtered againſt the life, Spirit, and power, but not in it; but in antichriſt's ſpirit and power, and againſt the truth.

Tenthly, He ſaith, *Chriſt the light within, will not give his power and authority out of his own hand to any man or men; for unto him alone is all judgment in heaven and in earth committed in matters of conſcience.*

Rem. Is Chriſt's power given out of his hands, when his life and Spirit in one judgeth concerning that which is evil and out of the truth in another? Doth not the ſpiritual man judge all things? Doth not Chriſt teach and enable him ſo to do? Is there not ſuch a gift of his to diſcern ſpirits? Cannot the ear that is circumciſed, and kept open by the Lord, try ſpeeches and actions, and diſcern when they are out of the life, and when in the life? And doth he give the power and authority out of his own hands, in enabling them ſo to do? What dark expreſſions are theſe, and dead too; not ſo much as literally true?

Eleventhly, He ſaith, *Chriſt the light within is able to break, and he is alſo able to bind up that which he hath broken, and to heal that which he hath wounded, &c.*

Rem. And hath not Chriſt put a ſpiritual rod and ſword into the hands of his church and miniſtry, with which to ſmite and wound, as his Spirit guides and leads them? Have they not power both to bind and looſe as Chriſt ſaith? And is not this a wounding and healing virtue and power? After Chriſt had ſaid, "Tell the church; but if he neglect to hear the "church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man or "a publican;" doth he not immediately add, "Ve-"rily I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on "earth, ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever ye "ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven?" Mat. xviii. 17, 18. Is not this power and authority neceſſary to the true church? What! a church, and not have power over her own members; but every one left to the dictates of what they ſhall call the light within, and not be ſubject to the judgment of the true light, Spirit, and power of Chriſt, the head in the living

living body? What a church was this? A mere Babel, and heap of confuſion, a body that would never be at unity in itſelf. But God is the God of the order of his own Spirit, life, and power; and not of ſuch confuſion. This doctrine may go for truth in Babylon, but can never be owned in God's Jeruſalem, where his Spirit did build up and defends the buildings, and judgeth out all ſuch ſandy and windy doctrines, which are looſe and airy, and have not a ground or bottom in the truth.

Twelfthly, He ſaith, *There is fallibility attends all thoſe, who are regenerated, and born of the Spirit of God, who is light, and that it is poſſible for them to err from the light again, &c.*

Rem. He doth herein lay the ſtate of the truly regenerate and born of God lower than the ſcripture lays it. The ſcripture ſaith, "Whoſoever is born of "God, doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth "in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of "God," 1 John iii. 9. And again, "We know that "whoſoever is born of God ſinneth not; but he that "is begotten of God keepeth himſelf, and that wicked "one toucheth him not," chap. v. 18.

There is a gathering into the ſeed, and an abiding in the ſeed; and there the ſoul is in the ſtrong tower, and munition of rocks, where the enemy cannot reach. Adam in the fall was in a fallible ſtate. Is the renewed, the redeemed ſtate as fallible? What ſtate is that wherein truth is ſo natural, and the ſoul ſo one with it, that it can do nothing againſt the truth, but for the truth, as Paul ſpeaks? What ſtate is that, wherein men overcoming, ſhall become pillars in the houſe of God, and ſhall go no more out? Rev. iii. 12. But let men be ever ſo fallible, the infallible Spirit and power is given to the church of God, to guide them in true underſtanding and judgment, eſpecially in all things that relate to and concern them as a body; and they that are of the truth, and in the truth, love the judgment of Chriſt the head in her; but they that are of another ſpirit, and would have liberty out of

the truth, to the transforming nature and ſpirit, cannot abide it. What were my life in me, if it did not judge in me? And what were the church's life, if it did not judge in her, and condemn all that riſeth up from a contrary ſpirit and nature? What means that promiſe, Iſai. liv. 17. "No weapon that is formed "againſt thee ſhall proſper, and every tongue that "riſeth againſt thee in judgment, ſhalt thou con-"demn?"

Yet he confeſſeth, *That God is infallible, and that no fallibility attends him*; but denies *the very regenerate and born of the Spirit to be infallible, and that it is poſſible for them to err from the light again; the enemy, which is the power of darkneſs, preſenting to them the fruit of the tree of knowledge, &c.*

Rem. If God be infallible, as he confeſſeth (though it is to be queſtioned, whether from any true knowledge of his nature, or only from the comprehenſion), and God beget children; into what doth he beget them? Whether into a fallible nature and ſpirit, or into his own nature and Spirit, the leaſt degree whereof is infallible? When men are truly turned to God, there are great and precious promiſes made to them, which through faith, obedience, and diligence, they come to enjoy, whereby they are made "partakers of "the divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 4. And when they partake of the "divine nature," do they partake of a nature that is fallible, or infallible? "He that is "joined to the Lord, is one Spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17. And is that one Spirit a fallible, or infallible Spirit? There is one baptiſm, wherewith the truly living are baptized; and doth that baptiſm waſh away that which is fallible or no? The church of Chriſt, the body of Chriſt, the ſpouſe of Chriſt, the chaſte virgin that is married to Chriſt, is one with Chriſt: is it one with him in fallibility, or in infallibility? Bear with me, for I am conſtrained to ſpeak theſe things for truth's ſake, for the church's ſake; yea, for Chriſt's ſake, and for the ſakes of them who cry up the light within in words, and yet are deceived about it, and know it not;

not; but are erred from it, and have ſet up the darkneſs of antichriſt in their minds, inſtead of it, which with them goes for the true light; and in this they judge that which is true, as if it were falſe, and juſtify that which is falſe, as if it were true, both in themſelves and others; both which are an abomination to the Lord.

He ſaith, *There is a fallibility attends all thoſe that are regenerate, and born of the Spirit of God.*

Rem. What all? Thoſe that come to the higheſt pitch, and greateſt growth, can they not paſs fallibility, and arrive at infallibility in a meaſure, and abide in it? To be regenerated and born of God, is an high ſtate; it is not for every notioniſt and comprehender to be talking what is experienced there. There is a regenerating, and a being regenerated. There is a following Chriſt in the regeneration, and there is a conformity to him in his death, and in his life too. It is not good for him to be ſpeaking much concerning that ſtate, but rather to wait to be led into it, and to arrive at it in the true travel. But how he that is regenerated is one with Chriſt (and is in the meaſure as he is) is hard to be known, and harder to be uttered. But he that is in this ſtate, hath witneſſed the holy calling, and faithfulneſs to him that called, and the election, and is one of the choſen, or elect of God; and Chriſt ſaith, ſuch are beyond fallibility; for ſpeaking of falſe Chriſts, he ſaith, "If it were "poſſible, they ſhould deceive the very elect," Mat. xxiv. 24. plainly ſignifying, that it is impoſſible.

Now their poſſibility of erring he lays upon the enemy's preſenting to them the fruit of the tree of knowledge, whilſt they are in Eden, p. 6.

Rem. The enemy's preſenting temptations, doth not imply a poſſibility of letting in the temptation, and ſo of erring, in all to whom he doth preſent things. For he preſented things to Chriſt, and yet it was impoſſible for that Spirit and nature that Chriſt was of, to let in his temptations.

But then, immediately in the next words he ſheweth, *How this poſſibility of falling is upon the enemy's preſenting to them the fruit of the tree of knowledge*; namely thus, *Their minds taking delight in it, and they feeding upon it, the enemy hath power to draw their minds out of Eden again.*

Rem. The regenerate and born of God are partakers of the divine nature, and wait on God for living food, and receive it of him, and live by it, and cannot abide dead, dry, notional food, nor feed upon it. Bleſſed be the Lord, there is that birth known, which can feed on nothing but life itſelf. And let the power of darkneſs preſent the fruit of the dead tree ever ſo often; the living babe will not meddle with it, but hungers and thirſts after righteouſneſs, and deſires the ſincere milk of the pure living word, that it may grow thereby. And if this holy nature be put into the babe, how much ſtronger is it in thoſe that are grown in truth, and who come to be naturalized into it, the contrary nature being crucified, and ſlain in them by the croſs of Chriſt, and the new and holy nature ruling in them?

Thirteenthly, He ſaith, *Wherefore I do believe that I ought not to ſubject myſelf to what the church impoſeth.*

Rem. The church of God under the law, walking in that outward covenant, was a glorious camp or body; and had outward power, according to the outward law, appertaining to it. And the church of God under the goſpel, walking with God according to the covenant of the goſpel, is a glorious, ſpiritual body, and hath inward power belonging to it; and though not the church merely as men, yet that Spirit and power in the church, ought to be obeyed by every member thereof, in things pertaining to God. So it was in the apoſtles days; they that were not diſorderly and unruly, were obedient to the Spirit and power of God in the apoſtles and churches then, 2 Cor. vii. 15. and chap. xxix. who had power to judge thoſe that were within, 1 Cor. v. 12. And thoſe that are indeed of God, will be obedient and ſubject

ſubject to his Spirit and power in his church now. And there is nothing elſe deſired, but obedience to the Lord, as he moves, guides, leads and orders, both in the particular, and in the general.

His reaſons why he doth not believe that he ought to ſubject himſelf to what the church impoſeth, are theſe: *For then*, ſaith he, *I muſt believe that it is God in them, which doth impoſe theſe yokes of bondage upon their brethren.*

Rem. The church is called into the liberty of the goſpel, and her children are born of the word immortal, and of the truth which makes free; and it is not the church's nature, either to receive or impoſe yokes of bondage, but to ſtand faſt, and to exhort all her members to ſtand faſt, in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made them free. But where there is any thing unruly, or contrary to the power, that is to be yoked down by the power.

And the particular waiting upon God in his Holy Spirit, light, and power; the Spirit, light, and power, will diſcover what is diſorderly, and unruly, and not of God in the particular, and lay a yoke upon it. The church alſo waiting upon God, in their meetings together in his name, the Lord will diſcover what is hurtful to the body, and contrary to the life of the body, and lay yokes upon it; and he that refuſeth this yoke, keeps alive that which is impure and fleſhly, and keeps down the juſt in himſelf.

But, indeed, he that doth not believe God in his church, and that his Spirit, life, and power, ſits as King there; he is not in a capacity to obey aright, becauſe he doth not diſcern nor acknowledge that in the church, which alone is to be obeyed.

Another reaſon he gives is, *Becauſe* (he ſaith) *he muſt alſo then believe that the church is infallible, and cannot err.*

Rem. The Spirit of God is infallible, the power whereby the church was gathered and built up, is infallible. Chriſt is infallible, and hath given to his church of his infallible Spirit; without which they

cannot be preſerved or act aright? and is the church in God fallible? And this Spirit will not fail them in their waiting upon him; and the church which is one with Chriſt, married to Chriſt, joined to Chriſt, partaketh of his holy, living, and infallible nature.

Judge in the truth, how it would ſuit: an holy head, an unholy body; a living head, a dead body; an infallible head, an elect and choſen head; but a body very liable to be deceived and err. Hath not the church that Spirit, that life, that power of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt her head with her, that is able to keep her from erring? And is it not her earneſt travail and deſire to keep to it herſelf, and to have all her members kept to it? And will not that power keep and preſerve all that keep to it?

He addeth further to the foregoing words, *Which thing I cannot believe, for then I muſt believe theſe particulars following.*

Firſt, *I muſt believe that they are as infallible as God is; and that it is as impoſſible for them to err, as it is for God to err.*

Anſ. No. A man may believe that God hath given to his church a glorious proportion of his Spirit, to dwell in them, and guide them, as his ſons, ſpouſe, and wife; and that they are married to him that is infallible, and partake of a bleſſed proportion of his nature; and yet not believe that they are as infallible as God is. The Lord is abſolutely infallible of himſelf; what infallibility the church hath, is by gift, by union, and communion with the Lord her Huſband and Maker.

But doth he believe, or will he go about to maintain, that the church hath nothing of the infallible Spirit of her huſband? Or that ſhe is to act in a fallible ſpirit? Or that ſhe is to act nothing at all? But only direct men to the light and Spirit within, and let her members alone, though ſhe infallibly (by the infallible Spirit and power) know that they are deceived and err, and ſee (with the anointed eye) that they are going from, and acting contrary to, the light in their own

own particulars? If ſhe ſhould do ſo, ſhe would ſhew little care over her children, and ſmall regard or faithfulneſs to him, who hath entruſted her with his own Spirit and power, for edification and ſalvation, and not for deſtruction.

Secondly, *That no man or woman ſhall ever attain to any higher meaſure of the grace of God than they; and that they are come to the higheſt revelation that can be attainable by the Spirit of God.*

Anſ. The higheſt meaſure of life and of the Spirit is not neceſſary for the government of the church; but a true meaſure. And a true meaſure the Lord hath ordained for his church; and Chriſt, the Head, is not abſent from his church; but preſent with it, to ſupply with what wiſdom and power he ſeeth needful. And where is the attainment and growth in grace? Is it in the church, or out of the church? Doth not the Lord add to the church ſuch as ſhall be ſaved? And is not their growth there? And if any member be bleſſed, and grow ever ſo abundantly in grace, it is the growth of the church, and the church is glad of it. Now if it be a true growth, they would have unity with the church, and mind the peace of the church, and be ſubject to the Spirit and pure power of life in the church; elſe their growth is in another ſpirit, which the true church can never own.

Thirdly, *And that there is no more to be made known by the Spirit of God, in the ſons and daughters of men, but what already is made known to them.*

Anſ. The particular's owning a meaſure of life, of truth, of the Spirit and power, doth not argue there is no more to be made known or revealed in the particular. And the church's owning a fuller meaſure dwelling in the body than in any one particular, (for the greateſt fulneſs in any particular doth but go to make up the largeneſs or fulneſs in the body) doth not argue that the church ſhall not grow, or be enlarged or filled as it grows. But if he intend the growth of any departing from the church, or out of the Spirit of life of the church, who hath her life from the Head, and

and is in unity with the Head, that growth we cannot but deny, finding it by conſtant trial and experience to be a growth in notion and comprehenſion, out of the feeling life and power.

Now this kind of growth I do not deſire ever to know; the Lord alſo preſerve others out of it, and open their ears to hear the voice of Chriſt, and of his church, that they may be preſerved out of it! For had this been hearkened and kept to, things had been better with many, as to their inward ſtate, and true peace with the Lord, than they have been.

Fourthly, *Or if there be any thing more to be revealed by the Spirit of God, that God will make it known to them, and to none elſe.*

Anſ. The true church doth not limit God where he ſhall reveal, or not reveal; but owneth God in whatever it reveals in any man upon the face of the earth. For being in unity with God's Spirit, and born of the immortal life, they are in the feeling ſenſe and knowledge of what came from the life in ages paſt, or in the preſent age, and are in unity with it; yet they know the Lord revealeth the myſtery of his truth and kingdom in the churches, and the growth is in the churches.

Now if any in Lucifer's nature will hearken to that ſpirit which deſpiſeth God's church, and rend from it, and think to grow above it, and expect this growth in their high notions and comprehenſions about things, in that exalted mind, ſhould be owned by the church, they will be miſtaken: for the true Spirit, which knows all things, and guides the church, will not guide the church to own any ſuch ſpirit or growth; but to judge and condemn it in its greateſt ſpreading and exaltation.

There were thoſe in the apoſtle's days who would ſeem to be grown high, and to be ſpiritual, far above the apoſtles, and ſuch as lay low in the truth, and obeyed the holy commandments, and yet were far ſhort of their life, as may be ſeen abundantly in his epiſtles to the church of Corinth. But what ſaith the apoſtle

apoſtle concerning ſuch? "If any man think himſelf "a prophet, or ſpiritual, let him acknowledge the "things that I write unto you are the commandments "of the Lord," 1 Cor. xii. 37. And did not he give commandments about thoſe that were unruly, and would not be ſubject to the order, power, and government of God's Spirit in the church? And did not the apoſtle ſay of unruly perſons, and vain talkers and deceivers, that mouths muſt be ſtopped? Tit. i. 10, 11. What! had the church or miniſters, in the firſt promulgation of the goſpel, power to ſtop mouths? Yea; in the Spirit that was in them, and with them, they knew which were the vain talkers, the unruly, and deceivers; and what mouths were to be ſtopped, and what power would ſtop them.

Fifthly, he ſaith, *Friends, I would have you ſeriouſly take into your ſerious conſideration ſome of your doctrines and principles which are commonly preached among us, how they can ſtand with God's ſovereignty, dominion, and glory, that either the ſeed or God ſhould ariſe in man?*

Rem. Chriſt preached a ſeed, even the kingdom, like a grain of muſtard ſeed, and the ſeed ſown in man. Now if it was ſown in man, in his earthly heart, nature, and ſpirit, then the earth was over it, and did cover it, and it was to ſpring up or ariſe over and above the earth, and the pure power, wiſdom and glory of the Father to appear to be manifeſted in it.

Is this ſuch a ſtrange doctrine to him? Where are his ſpiritual ſenſes? How was he convinced? Was it without the feeling of the ſeed? If he truly felt it, where did he feel it? Did he not feel it in the earth? Was there not much over it?

I am ſure we, who were truly convinced, felt it ſo; felt the pure ſeed under ſuffering, the pure life under, the pure meaſure of truth under, and much of the earth over it, the Lamb ſlain inwardly by ſin and tranſgreſſion; and bleſſed be the Lord, we felt alſo the earth judged, and removed out of its place; the earth ploughed up, and the ſeed ſpringing over all that is earthly,

earthly, and growing up in that which God made new, over that which was old.

And did not God arise outwardly, in the manifestation of his power outwardly, among the outward Jews? And doth not he arise inwardly, in the manifestation of his power inwardly, among the inward Jews? Are the enemies ever scattered inwardly till God's arising inwardly? What kind of convincement or growth hath that man been acquainted with, who never experienced these things?

Now having proposed this, he asketh some questions, which as the Lord shall open my heart I may return answers to; not after a notional way, but as the Lord hath given me the knowledge, feeling, and experience of the thing.

His first question is, *Whether the Light, or Spirit, Seed, and God, be not all one and the same thing?*

Ans. God is the fulness, the seed is a measure and manifestation of him, the infinite fulness. And as he is light and Spirit, so the seed that comes from him, or that the good husbandman sows, is light and Spirit also.

His second question is, *How came this seed of God to be under, or beneath, in man?*

Ans. Any man that knows the truth in holy experience, and hath been tempted, and let in sin upon him, may know what comes then under, and how it comes under. The Spirit by sin is grieved; yea, the Holy Spirit may be quenched, and man may crucify to himself the Lord of glory.

His third and fourth questions are, *What shall raise it up?* And, *By what?*

Answer to both. The power of God, the Spirit of God, the life of God, entering into its own in man, entering into the witness, raiseth it up, brings that under which resisted, oppressed, and kept it down. The power of the Almighty, by his out-stretched arm, crusheth Pharaoh inwardly, and brings his spiritual seed out of spiritual Egypt, Sodom, and Babylon; in all which the Lord, in all ages, hath inwardly and spi-

ſpiritually been crucified by them that have reſiſted his Holy Spirit in the pure manifeſtations thereof; for what is done to it, is done to him. "Saul, Saul, "why perſecuteſt thou me?"

Laſtly, *Whether the appearance of God in man, to man by his Spirit, be not for the quickening and raiſing of man, both ſoul and body, out of a ſtate of bondage and captivity?*

Anſ. Yes, it is; but how doth God raiſe up man? Is it not by joining him to his ſeed, and cauſing him to bow to his ſeed, and ſuffer with his ſeed, and deny that which is contrary to his ſeed; ſo that the ſeed, which hath been grieved and burdened with ſin and iniquity, may riſe up over it, and cruſh the head of the ſerpent, in the authority, power and dominion of the Father's life? Who of the redeemed-ones, that have witneſſed true redemption, have not witneſſed God bringing that up which was down, low, deep in the heart, and bringing that down which was high and exalted over it?

But for the raiſing of God, that is but his miſrepreſentation of this ſound doctrine, and holy experience: for Chriſt himſelf, who was God, and the reſurrection and the life; yet the Godhead was not raiſed in him, but the reſurrection and the life raiſed that body. And that of him, which he ſoweth in us, and which differeth in the ſoul, through the ſoul's ſin, he raiſeth up in his own holy dominion, in them that come to ſuffer with it, and to bear the croſs with that which crucifieth ſin.

This is ſound doctrine, and ſound experience, univerſally experienced by all that know the inward truth, and have ſubjected to it. They have felt what truth was, and where it was; and what it is, and where it is; and what they are in it, and by it; bleſſings and praiſes over all unto him, who by the working of his moſt glorious power, hath brought this about in a remnant whom the Lord hath viſited and ſhewn mercy to.

Let

Let him wait for true underſtanding from him who is able to give it, and anſwer me this one queſtion then, *Doth not the devil, the enemy of mankind, hunt after the precious life, even in thoſe that come to witneſs redemption in meaſure from him? And if at any time they hearken to his temptations, and let him in, doth not the life receive a wound? Is not the Spirit grieved? Is not the tender, righteous, living plant hurt?*

Oh! the tender mercy of God to permit his truth, his ſeed, his Son, not only to ſuffer for man without the gates of Jeruſalem, but alſo to ſuffer in man, even in the ſtreets of Sodom, where our Lord was in ages paſt crucified, and is ſpiritually crucified to this day! Rev. xi. 8.

He ſaith, *The kingdom of heaven is within all men and women, and heaven is above hell, and the light is above darkneſs*, p. 7.

Rem. If he mean that their nature is ſo, I grant it; but if he mean that heaven, or the light which is heavenly, is uppermoſt in men who are under the kingdom and power of darkneſs, he is utterly miſtaken: for in the kingdom where Satan and antichriſt reign, antichriſt is there exalted (in that heart) above all that is called God; even above the light, Spirit, and power which ought to be worſhipped and obeyed there, but is not: and there is need of the arm and power of God to be awakened, and to put on ſtrength there, to cut Rahab, wound the Dragon, and bring him under, and to bring up the ſeed into his heavenly authority, dominion, and power (which is due unto it) in that heart.

He ſaith, *The ſeed is to redeem, and not to be redeemed.*

Rem. This is true, relating to the ſeed, as it is in itſelf: but as God has beſtowed it on man, given it as a gift in man, and it condeſcends to his condition, deſcending into the lower parts of the earth, and ſuffering with man, that it might bring man into its death and ſufferings, and ſo raiſe him in and with itſelf;

itſelf; ſo the mighty power of life, from whence it came, is to be revealed in it, and bring it out of Egypt, and the darkneſs wherein it finds man, and in the tender love of God to man, bears a ſhare with him. It is not only the Jew outwardly that pierced Chriſt, but the ſoul inwardly by tranſgreſſion pierceth his life and Spirit; and as it comes to true ſenſe and faith, looks upon him whom he hath pierced by ſin, and mourns bitterly over him, and turns from and hates that ſin whereby it pierced him.

He ſaith, *The ſeed in both man and woman is both God and Chriſt, and is above the ſeed of the ſerpent in all, and he is in himſelf*, &c. p. 7.

Rem. Who denies that God and Chriſt, and the holy ſeed, which are one in nature, though not in meaſure and fulneſs, as he is in himſelf, is above the ſeed of the ſerpent?

He addeth further, *Neither hath man's mind been ſo blinded, that he could not ſee his ſins by the light*, p. 8. l. 38. (as corrected by the errata.)

Rem. There is an eye that the God of this world blinds, that it may not ſee the glorious ſhinings of the light, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. And the eye that is blind cannot ſee, till God opens it. The outward eye cannot ſee the ſhining of the outward ſun, but as it is opened; nor can the inward eye ſee inward things, but as the Lord opens it. Paul was ſent to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, Acts xxvi. 18. So that man's eye is blinded, that though the light ſhine in the darkneſs, yet he cannot ſee, nor walk in the way of the light, but as God anoints and opens his eye; "anoint thine eyes "with eye-ſalve, that thou mayeſt ſee," Rev. iii. 18.

But I beſeech him, in the tender bowels of love, to conſider where his ſtanding is, and what it is in him, that brings forth theſe things; for I am ſure it is not the true light, wherewith God hath ſhined in the hearts of his people, and doth ſhine at this day. He miſtakes the true light in others, and calls it darkneſs;

neſs; and alſo miſtakes the darkneſs in himſelf, and calls it light: and whither, after this rate, may he wander in his uncertain notions and comprehenſions; and while he is thus talking of God, and heaven, and the light within, let him take heed leſt he be found among them who blaſpheme God, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven?

What I have hitherto took notice of, may ſufficiently manifeſt, even to himſelf, could he retire low enough, where the true underſtanding and knowledge is given, how he hath erred from the true light, and but pretended to it, and not been led by it, in what he hath now writ.

As for the other part of his book, though I could ſay much to it, if the Lord did require me; yet finding it chiefly to be matter of notion and criticiſm, my heart is not engaged to meddle with it; for it is not in me, to bring people into ſuch critical diſputes, about an inviſible man, or inviſible woman, or who was the firſt inviſible man; which one while he ſeems to call God or Chriſt, another while the ſon of perdition, or power of darkneſs, the firſt inviſible man, as p. 21. for which I am ſatisfied, he can produce no ſcripture; which he requires of friends for what they aſſert.

I muſt confeſs, I ſee no profit in his meddling with ſuch things; but rather a drawing the minds of the people into forbidden knowledge, and airy comprehenſion about the heavenly things, and feeding that part in themſelves, which ſhould not thus be ſuffered to fly aloft, but be kept under.

And happy were it for him, if he could feel the truth, ſeed and life (which is grieved in him), riſe above them, trample them down, and reign over them: but he muſt experience great humility, and a long travel, before he can come to witneſs this.

As for his denying himſelf to be of us; indeed he hath ſufficiently manifeſted by this book, and by his ſtrange notions and comprehenſions therein, that he

is

is not of us; but a ſtranger to that life, ſpirit and power, which hath gathered, guideth, and preſerveth us out of ſuch paths as theſe.

And oh! that he did not hug ſo many notions (and thoſe very ſtrange ones too, contrary to the truth and holy experience, in the hearts of God's redeemed ones, and the holy ſcriptures, as hath been already ſhewed), and get ſuch comprehenſions into his brain, concerning the ſaving power; but wait to deſcend, and come down thither, where he may feel it in his heart, and that will preſerve him for the future from ſuch contradictions and confuſions, which the other part of his book is alſo too full of; which, if the Lord pleaſe, he may draw forth ſome other to lay open, for the vindication of truth, and its true teſtimony, from his ſpirit and falſe teſtimony, uttered in very ſtrange and extravagant expreſſions; not at all ſuitable to the nature of the truth, but rather to the nature of that dark ſpirit from whence it came; which the Lord of his tender mercy manifeſt to him, and redeem him from, into a tender, living, humble ſenſe of the meek and lowly principle of life in the heart.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the writing of the former, and my not intending to meddle with the reſt, there hath ſomething lain upon me, as to ſome few paſſages therein alſo, to write a few words, by way of teſtimony, to one or two particulars therein: but that which mainly lay upon me, was ſomewhat in relation to his Poſtſcript; he looking upon it as ſo unanſwerable, and yet ſo plain and clear an anſwer ariſing to it in my heart.

Firſt, As to his main controverſy with friends, about the *Chriſt that died at Jeruſalem* (he affirming, *That*

neither juſtification nor condemnation is by him; and reproaching friends, *as having gone back to the profeſſors Chriſt and Saviour, who died without the gates of Jeruſalem*, as p. 17. 21. 26.); this is in my heart to ſay:

Rem. Is Chriſt divided? Is there one Chriſt that died without the gates of Jeruſalem, and another that did not die? Or is it not the ſame Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who died without the gates of Jeruſalem, according to the fleſh, and yet was then alive in the ſpirit? Do we affirm that the Godhead died? (No, we do not ſo much as affirm, *that his ſoul died*, as he doth, p. 19.) but according to the fleſh he died; that is, he who was the reſurrection, and the life, laid down his life, and took it up again, according to the commandment of his Father.

Thus we have been taught of God to believe, and thus to hold it forth. And we have no other juſtifier, condemner, Saviour, or interceſſor, than he that laid down the life of the body, offering it up a ſacrifice to his Father, without the gates of Jeruſalem. "Who "is he that juſtifieth?" Is it not God, in and through him? And, "Who is he that condemneth? Is it *not* "Chriſt that died?" And where did he die? Was it not without the gates of Jeruſalem? "Yea rather, "that is riſen again," &c. Rom. viii. 33, 34.

Secondly, The next thing that lies upon me to take notice of, is writing againſt ſenſe, and diſowning the exhortation to come to a ſenſe, and to wait in a ſenſe, and abide in a ſenſe, &c. as p. 25.

Rem. Though I have given a touch at this already, in the foregoing part, yet there is ſomewhat more lies upon me. The inward man, the new man, the ſpiritual man, hath inward and ſpiritual ſenſes. Chriſt's ſheep have ſpiritual ears to hear his voice with; and a ſpiritual eye is given to the ſpiritual man, to ſee him who otherwiſe is inviſible.

There is alſo a ſpiritual taſte to ſavour and diſtinguiſh between that which is living, and that which is dead; between that which is corrupt and unwholeſome,

ſome, and that which is wholeſome food: and by the exerciſe of theſe ſenſes, the children of God become more and more ſkilful in diſcerning between good and evil, Heb. v. 14. And in this living ſenſe, the elect cry unto God againſt their enemies, and are heard and preſerved by him, and ſhall in due time be fully delivered, Luke xviii. 7, 8.

The truly living are truly ſenſible. Indeed, if he could take away the ſenſe of life, and the judgment of life from God's people, it were an eaſy matter to deceive them with ſuch kind of notions and comprehenſions, as he hath brought forth in this his book. But the Lord hath given a living ſenſe or ſenſes to his, and pure living judgment therein; which their minds being kept to, it is impoſſible for this ſpirit, or any ſuch like, with all its inchantments, to prevail upon them, becauſe the ſheep's ear knows the ſound and voice of life, from the ſound and voice of death, let antichriſt transform in any of his miniſters ever ſo myſteriouſly.

He ſaith, *God is not a ſenſe, nor is his Spirit a ſenſe.*

Rem. It is not for him, in his notional way, to ſay what God is; he that made the eye, ſhall not he ſee? He that made the ear, ſhall not he hear? Doth he beget his children into a living ſenſe, and beſtow living ſenſes upon them? And hath not he the thing in himſelf much more?

But let me aſk him this queſtion; did God, the holy begetter of life, ever beget him into a living ſenſe? If not, he was never of us; if the Lord did, let him wait to be begotten ſo again, and he ſhall ſoon be one of us again, and judge in the true Spirit, life, and power, what he hath here writ and publiſhed abroad in the wrong; and he ſhall no longer believe, that this his writing was written from the teſtimony of Jeſus in him (as he expreſſeth, p. 21.), but ſhall experience the life of Jeſus condemning it in his own heart, as I am ſure it hath done and doth in mine, and cannot but do in all that have been gathered to, and abide in, that which keepeth livingly ſenſible.

Thirdly, The third thing, and that which moſt lies upon me, is that charge of his upon friends, *That they do ſhew more homage, reverence, and obedience to the form outwardly, than to the power of God inwardly; and that they worſhip the form beyond the power, becauſe they keep their hats on when they wait and worſhip in ſilence; but in public prayer, both men and women either ſtand up, or elſe kneel down, and the men all put off their hats: herein* (he ſaith) *they worſhip, reverence, and adore the form outwardly; and the words, more than the word of life in their hearts*, &c. *This practice he would have them vindicate, if they can: indeed he hath ſufficiently condemned it, and more than God hath allowed him to do, or will juſtify him in.*

Rem. The thing is nakedly and plainly thus; the great God, by the arm of his power, hath gathered a people to himſelf, and taught them to worſhip him in his own Spirit and truth; yea, he hath taught us to be continually retired, and upon our watch, and in his fear; eyeing and regarding him in all we do.

Beſides this, he hath appointed us ſolemn times of meeting together to worſhip him; in which times we do, in a more ſolemn, and after a more eſpecial manner, retire to feel his preſence with us, and holy Spirit and power working in our hearts, and miniſtering to us. And, bleſſed be the Lord, he is ſtill found, according to his promiſe, in the midſt of us; and doth give us pure breathings after him, and pure ſenſe of him, and pure praiſes to him; even praiſes from, and in, that which is pure.

Yet, while we are ſitting thus waiting, or when breathings or praiſes ariſe, we are not taught or required of the Lord to pull off our hats, or kneel on our knees.

But when the Lord moveth and calleth any forth (for the aſſembly, or in the name and on the behalf of the aſſembly) to offer prayer or praiſes to God; then, to ſignify our unity in the Spirit, and our joint reverence to our God, we are moved either to kneel,

or

or ſtand, as the Lord ſhall incline our hearts, and to uncover our heads before him. And in this we do not adore the form, as our God knoweth and beareth witneſs; but him who hath taught us the form, and who teacheth us to continue therein, and juſtifieth us in the uſe and practice thereof.

And what ſpirit is this that condemneth us after this vaunting manner, as if he had brought forth ſuch a manifeſt evidence of our adoring the form, as could not be anſwered?

The laſt thing which lies on me to take notice of, is thoſe words about the cloſe of his poſtſcript; *I have yet another book, that is written in and from the Spirit of God; the tendency of which book is, for the overthrowing of all antichriſt's miniſters in this nation,* &c.

Rem. This teſtimony lies on my heart concerning him, that he is not in a condition, or capacity, to write or ſpeak in or from God's Spirit. He may pretend to have written this, or to write another book, from God's Spirit, but he doth but take the name of the Lord in vain in ſo doing, and the Spirit of the Lord will without doubt, through ſome of thoſe that are in him that is true, give a ſure and certain ſound, and teſtimony, againſt his falſe pretences.

Oh! that he could indeed think, or write, or ſpeak againſt antichriſt's miniſters, and againſt the ſpirit of antichriſt; which if ever he be able from God to do, he muſt firſt ſee how antichriſt hath prevailed over him, and darkened him, and how he dwelleth and reigneth in his heart, as if he were God; yea, he muſt deny his preſent light and ſpirit, and call it no more Chriſt; but feel that which is now little and low in him riſe (through his ſenſe of it, and ſubjection to it) over that which is now ſo high, and ſo exalted above the meaſure of truth in his own heart; which, if it were ſo, or might once be ſo, how glad would my ſoul be for his ſake, which is now grieved to ſee him ſo lifted up, and ſo miſtaken, and ſo deeply to err, both concerning himſelf, and God's people, church,

and miniſters, and concerning God's light and Spirit; denying, debaſing, and caſting down that, to exalt himſelf; that ſo he might ſet up the wrong inſtead of the right, and be juſtified and owned by the one, ſeeing he cannot by the other!

The Lord, if it be his will, in tender mercy to him, bring him down from his high ſeat, and exalt that holy blood of the covenant, which is now trampled under foot by him, that his ſoul may be ſaved, and not periſh for ever (in the day that never ſhall have end) from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Amen.

SOME

SOME

MISREPRESENTATIONS OF ME,

CONCERNING

CHURCH-GOVERNMENT, cleared.

AND THE

POWER and AUTHORITY of GOD's SPIRIT, in Governing his CHURCH, teſtified to.

By one whom it hath pleaſed the Lord to make a Member of the Church, which he hath gathered, and preſerveth by his own Almighty Arm; who accounteth it his Duty and Honour in the Lord, to be ſubject to the Government and Ordering of his Spirit and Power in his Church,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

" That ye ſubmit yourſelves unto ſuch, and to every one that " helpeth with us, and laboureth," 1 Cor. xvi. 16.

" Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves; " for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account, " that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is " unprofitable for you," Heb. xiii. 17.

" Likewiſe, ye younger, ſubmit yourſelves unto the elder; yea, " all of you be ſubject one to another, and be clothed with " humility: for God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to " the humble," 1 Pet. v. 5.

" And be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs: but be filled " with the Spirit, and ſubmitting yourſelves one to another in " the fear of God," Epheſ. v. 18, 21.

THE PREFACE.

UPON occaſion of the ſuffering of our dear friends and brethren in New-England, cruel impriſonments, many hard uſages, and at laſt (ſome of them) death itſelf, for their obedience and faithful teſtimony to the Lord, and his precious truth; and becauſe of the undue covering thereof, by the grounds and cauſes produced to juſtify their proceedings; I was engaged to ſhew the nakedneſs and unreaſonableneſs thereof, in a book, intituled, "An Examination of the Grounds "and Cauſes, which are ſaid to induce the Court of "Boſton in New-England, to make that Order or "Law of Baniſhment againſt the QUAKERS, &c." Whereunto ſomewhat was added (being very proper to the ſubject in hand) about the authority and government which Chriſt excluded out of his church, which alſo occaſioned ſomewhat concerning the true church-government.

Now this latter part (about church-government) hath been ſo miſrepreſented, as if, becauſe the wrong church-government was excluded, the excluſion of all church-government was intended by me, there being no notice taken of my owning the true church-government, but only ſome paſſages of my diſowning the falſe produced, as if they intended to overturn and deny all church-government, which never was intended by me: for in that very book, which is thus made uſe of, I did poſitively affirm the neceſſity and uſe of the true church-government, which may more fully appear in that which hereafter follows.

SOME

SOME

Misrepresentations of Me,

CONCERNING

CHURCH-GOVERNMENT.

FOR the manifesting that I am misrepresented, and the clearing of my innocency from those misrepresentations, this is on my heart;

First, To set down those words which John Pennyman hath cited out of that part of my book which speaks of the authority and government which Christ excluded out of his church.

Secondly, To add somewhat, in way of confirmation of that truth and tender sense, which was then upon my heart.

Thirdly, To propose some questions, as I shall find them arise in my heart, further to open and manifest the intent of my heart in this thing.

Fourthly, To annex somewhat, which is mentioned and immediately added in the very same part of the book, concerning true church-government; which plainly manifesteth that I was not against the true church-government, nor did mention or intend any of those things to hinder, deny, or oppose the true church-government, of which I do there infer an absolute necessity.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, It is on my heart to add a few conſiderations further, concerning the neceſſity, uſefulneſs, and benefit of the true church-government.

The firſt words John Pennyman cites out of this part of my book, concerning the authority and government which Chriſt excluded out of his church, from Matt. xx. 25. to 29. are theſe.

'Here Chriſt cuts off that power and authority, 'which grows up in the corrupt nature of man, which 'was ever and anon ſpringing up even in the diſciples; 'here he wholly excludes it out of his church, and 'ſaith expreſly, he would have no ſuch thing amongſt 'them, no ſuch kind of greatneſs, no ſuch kind of 'authority.'

Confirm. It is the full belief of my heart, that Chriſt hath cut off that power and authority which grows up in the corrupt nature of man, and wholly excluded it out of his church, even very expreſly in this forecited ſcripture; plainly ſignifying therein, that he would have no ſuch kind of greatneſs, no ſuch kind of authority among his gathered and choſen people.

Queſt. But doth this ſignify or imply, that he would have no authority at all? Doth this exclude the authority and government of his Spirit and power in his church? Doth not he, notwithſtanding this, ſay, "Go "tell the church?" And enjoin the members of the church to hear the church, upon the penalty of being accounted heathens and publicans? And did not the Holy Ghoſt make and appoint overſeers over the church? Acts xx. 28. And what is an overſeer? Or in what were they to overſee? Were they not to overſee in the true light, to which every child of light is to be ſubject? And they that did reſiſt the light, Spirit, and power of the Holy Ghoſt in any of the overſeers, were they not unruly, and departers from the light in themſelves; though they might pretend they were ſtill for the

the light, and that it was the overſeers that were departed and erred from it?

The next Words he cites are theſe:

'TWO things are here excluded by Chriſt 'from whence all the miſchief ariſeth in the 'church, all the tyranny and oppreſſion of mens con-'ſciences, and of their perſons, eſtates and liberties 'for conſcience-ſake. *Firſt*, Greatneſs: *Secondly*, The 'exerciſing dominion and authority by thoſe that 'would be great therein.'

Confirm. It is my belief, that all the miſchief in the church, tyranny, and oppreſſion of mens conſciences, and of their perſons, eſtates, and liberties for conſcience-ſake, doth ariſe from a wrong greatneſs, and from the exerciſing of a wrong dominion and authority, by thoſe that would be great therein; and that theſe two things are here excluded by Chriſt, in the forementioned ſcripture.

Queſt. But is there not a true greatneſs? Thoſe that lie low before the Lord, and have humbled themſelves under his mighty hand; doth not the Lord exalt them in due time, filling them with his Spirit, life, virtue, and power? And is not that great in them? And are they not highly favoured, and exalted in the eye of the Lord therein? (Oh! none knows how great thoſe are in the eye of the Lord, who are poor and low, and nothing in their own eyes!) And is there not a true authority and dominion of God's Spirit in the church in general, as well as in the particular, over the ſpirit and power of darkneſs? Becauſe of which ſpirit, becauſe of which power, becauſe which holy authority and dominion, the gates of hell ſhall not be able to prevail againſt it.

His

His next citation is this (which though ſomewhat long, I am willing to recite punctually, that my innocency may the more appear.)

'THIS ſpirit muſt be kept out from amongſt you, this aſpiring ſpirit, this lofty, ruling ſpirit, which loves to be great, which loves to have dominion, which would exalt itſelf becauſe of the gifts it hath received, and would bring others into ſubjection; this ſpirit muſt be ſubdued amongſt Chriſt's diſciples, or it will ruin all. The Lord gives grace and knowledge for another end, than for men to take upon them to be great, and rule over others becauſe of it. And he, that becauſe of this, thinks himſelf fit to rule over other mens conſciences, and to make them bow to what he knows, or takes to be truth, he loſeth his own life thereby; and ſo far as he prevails upon others, he doth but deſtroy their life too. Therefore the diſciples, or church of Chriſt, are to watch over every ſuch ſpirit, to beat it down, to teſtify againſt it, to turn from it, to lay it flat, to put it in its proper place, that is, beneath all, and ſo not to ſuffer it to ariſe.'

Before I come to the confirmation of this, I judge it meet to ſet down the foregoing clauſe or paragraph omitted by him, which will very much help to clear the naked drift and intent of theſe words. The foregoing paragraph runs thus:

'Such a kind of greatneſs as is in the world, is the deſtruction of the life of Chriſt; and ſuch a kind of dominion and authority as is among the nations, is a direct overturning of the kingdom of Chriſt. It ſets up another power than Chriſt's, another greatneſs than Chriſt's, another kind of authority than Chriſt's; and ſo eats out the virtue and life of his kingdom, and makes it juſt like one of the kingdoms of this world.'

This

This (which immediately went before) being thus added, may ſufficiently open the thing of itſelf. Yet for further ſatisfaction, I ſhall add a confirmation to the truth of that which he hath cited; and that in ſeveral particulars, becauſe of the length of the citation.

Confirm. Firſt, An aſpiring ſpirit, a lofty, ruling ſpirit, which loves to be great, which loves to have dominion, which would exalt itſelf, &c. muſt be kept out from among the diſciples and church of Chriſt. There muſt not be ſuch a ſpirit, or loving to be great, or ſuch a ruling among them, as is in the world. No; life alone, the Spirit alone, the humble ſeed alone, the truth alone, the grace alone, muſt rule among them; and God forbid the authority and government thereof ſhould be ſtopt in any. It cannot be well with the church that it ſhould be ſo, that God's Spirit ſhould be grieved or quenched, or ſtopped in its holy way of governing and ordering the church of its own building.

Second, That which would exalt itſelf becauſe of the gifts it hath received, and would bring others into ſubjection; this ſpirit muſt be ſubdued among Chriſt's diſciples, or it will ruin all. God alone, Chriſt alone, the Spirit alone, the truth alone, the ſeed alone, is to be exalted in the church; not fleſh, nor ſelf, nor the aſpiring, lofty, ruling ſpirit.

Third, The Lord gives grace and knowledge for another end, than for men to take upon them to be great, and rule over others becauſe of it. Man, without grace and true knowledge, is high and exalted, and would be ruling over, and ſubjecting others; but true grace and knowledge brings man down, and keeps him low, even out of every deſire of aſpiring and ruling over others, in earneſt breathings and endeavours that both the grace and ſpirit may teach and rule both over himſelf and others.

Fourth, Becauſe God hath given a man knowledge, he muſt not take upon him to rule over others with his knowledge. Chriſt did not rule over his diſciples with

with his knowledge, nor require them to believe what he knew to be truth. Nor may any man at this day, though ever ſo full of God's holy Spirit and power, take upon him (above what his Lord and Maſter did) to rule over other mens conſciences. If he do, he will do it out of the leadings of life, and of God's holy Spirit; and ſo will wound and hurt his own life thereby; and ſo far as herein he prevails on others, he will hurt their life too.

Fifth, Therefore this ſpirit (which Chriſt never was of himſelf, nor encouraged in his diſciples) the church is to watch over, beat down, teſtify againſt, turn from, lay flat, and keep beneath all, and ſo not ſuffer it to ariſe.

Queſt. But doth all this hinder, deny, or oppoſe Chriſt's Spirit, Chriſt's power, Chriſt's truth and grace from ariſing in the church, in a way of ſpiritual and holy government? Becauſe man is not to aſpire, nor take upon him to reign or rule, becauſe of grace, gifts, or knowledge received; ſhall not therefore the head govern the body? Shall not life, and truth, and the wiſdom of God, ſpring in the church, to order and govern the church? But muſt every man be left to the dictates of what he calls light in him, and not be reproved or teſtified againſt, though the Spirit of God manifeſt it (to them that are indeed in the light, life, Spirit, and power) that it is not light, as perſons may pretend and imagine; but real darkneſs, groſs darkneſs, darkneſs that may be felt, even by the leaſt babes that are in the true, living ſenſe?

The next Citation.

'IF this rule of Chriſt had been kept to, antichriſt's 'power could never have got up, nor the poor 'innocent lambs ſo often have been worried by the 'wolves.'

Confirm.

Confirm. It is moſt certainly true, if the wrong authority and government had been kept down; if the aſpiring, lofty ſpirit, which exalts itſelf, and loves to have the preheminence over that which it ſhould be ſubject to both in itſelf and others, had been judged, beat down, denied, turned from, &c. how could the ſpirit of antichriſt, which is the ſpirit that would be exalting itſelf above all that is indeed of God, have got up? This is the wolf that worries the lambs; and if this power and ſpirit be kept out of the church, how can there be any wolf found there, to worry the innocent lambs and ſheep of Chriſt?

Queſt. But did ever antichriſt's power get up by the exerciſe of the power of Chriſt in his church? Doth not that power turn again antichriſt, and keep out antichriſt? Did that power ever worry the lambs? Nay, rather doth it not cheriſh, feed, build up, and preſerve the lambs? And is it poſſible but antichriſt's power ſhould get up, unleſs this power be watched to, and obſerved, in its ordering and governing the church, and diſcovering the ſubtil working of the wolfiſh ſpirit of antichriſt; which appears in the ſheep's clothing, and may pretend to the light within, that it might draw men from that which is indeed the light within, into that which is indeed darkneſs in the ſight of the Lord, and in the ſight of all that are kept truly living and ſenſible by him?

The next Citation.

'THE great work of the miniſters of Chriſt, is 'to keep the conſcience open to Chriſt, and 'to preſerve men from receiving any truths as from 'them, further than the Spirit opens, or to imitate 'any of their practices, further than the Spirit leads, 'guides, and perſuades them; for perſons are exceeding prone to receive things as truths, from thoſe 'they have an high opinion of, and to imitate their 'practices

'practices, and so hurt their own growth, and endanger their souls.'

Confirm. When the minister of Christ comes with the gospel of Christ, he finds men in darkness, with their consciences defiled, with the door of the heart shut against Christ. Now his great work is to turn them to the light, Spirit, and power, whereby their hearts may be opened, their consciences washed, and there may be a ready entrance for Christ's Spirit and power into them. Then the conscience being opened to Christ, their great endeavour, labour, and work, is to keep it open, and that that may not be let in again by them, which will shut it against Christ. For as there is one spirit opens to Christ, so there is another will shut, even after the heart and conscience is opened, if a man hearken to it.

And the way of receiving truth, is in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit in one's own particular; and this is for ever the aim and care of the ministers of Christ to keep men to, and not to allure men to receive truths as from them, but from Christ; or to imitate their practices, further than the Spirit leads, guides, and persuades them. For the ministers of Christ are sensible how exceeding prone persons are to receive things as truths, from those they have an high opinion of; and to imitate their practices, and so hurt their own growth, and endanger their souls. Now it lies on my heart to testify, upon this occasion, that I have found the ministers of Christ, whom I have conversed with in this age, walk so towards me and others, still turning me to that light, Spirit, and truth in my own particular, wherein the knowledge of truth was to be given me by the Lord, and not imposing upon me that which they knew to be truth, before the Lord had prepared and fitted my heart for the knowledge thereof. And this is still the course and practice of the ministers of Christ to this day.

Queſt. But muſt not the miniſter of Chriſt, who is ordained of God to watch for the ſoul, watch againſt that, which (if hearkened to by any particular) will ſhut the conſcience againſt Chriſt, and open it to another ſpirit, who is often working in a myſtery to deceive it? And if they ſee the working of this other ſpirit in any, ought they not, in faithfulneſs to Chriſt, and the ſouls of ſuch, to warn them of it! And if any, having let in the wrong ſpirit, turn from, and deny, the practices which the Lord once taught them, (and wherein the teſtimony of truth ſtands) into practices which are of the world, and anſwer the world's ſpirit, and tend to weaken the faithful teſtimonies of others in the true light and Spirit; ought the miniſter of Chriſt to leave theſe perſons to their openneſs to a wrong ſpirit, and wrong practices, wherein they deny the Lord that bought them and enlightened them, and are ſhut up againſt the viſitations and teſtimonies of God's true Spirit and power in his children, who keep their habitations in that light which theſe are departed from, though they make ever ſo great pretences to it?

The next Citation.

'AH! poor hearts! how ſimply do they come 'thither, where they once taſted refreſhment, 'to find wholeſome advice, not ſuſpecting what is 'got up there ſince; and ſo give dominion to a 'wrong thing, and take directions from a wrong ſpi-'rit, and betray their own ſimplicity? Therefore the 'main thing is to keep the conſcience pure to the 'Lord, and not to take things for truths becauſe 'others ſee them to be truths, but to wait till the 'Spirit makes them manifeſt to me; nor to run into 'worſhips, duties, performances, or practices, becauſe 'others are led thither, but to wait till the Spirit 'lead me thither. He that makes haſte to be rich, '(even in religion, running into knowledge, and into 'wor-

'worſhips and performances before he feel a true 'and clear evidence) ſhall not be innocent, nor the 'Lord will not hold him guiltleſs, when he comes to 'viſit for ſpiritual adultery and idolatry.'

Confirm. This hath been experienced in this our day, more than once; when ſome, having departed from the power whereby the innocent lambs had taſted ſweet nouriſhment and refreſhment through them, and have come afterwards for that which is wholeſome, not ſuſpecting what was got up in them ſince, and ſo gave dominion to a wrong thing, and took directions from a wrong ſpirit, and betrayed their own ſimplicity.

Queſt. But had theſe reſorted to the church, and waited for judgment from the church, to whom God has given eyes to ſee, in ſuch caſes as may paſs the eye-ſight of the particular, and a mouth to ſpeak; might not the church have been inſtrumental to have opened the true eye in them alſo, and ſo have preſerved them from being enſnared, by any that ran out from the truth in their own particulars, and loſt their habitation therein? And mark, when the church was in its great glory, clothed with the ſun, and the moon under its feet, and crowned with a crown of twelve ſtars, yet the dragon, even then, might prevail upon ſome ſtars, and with his tail ſweep them down from their place; but the church he could not prevail upon. The gates of hell, the power of the dragon, the mouth of the dragon, nay, the tail of the dragon (which what if I ſhould ſay is the falſe prophet within) cannot.

Further Confirm. Indeed, the main thing is to keep the conſcience pure to the Lord. To bring men to that which purifies the conſcience, and to keep them to it, this is the great work. Men muſt not take things for truths, becauſe others ſee them to be truths, (that is not God's way, nor did his miniſters ever ſo teach) but to wait till God's Spirit makes them manifeſt to the particular. Nor muſt men run into worſhips, duties, performances, or practices, becauſe others are led

thither, but wait till the Spirit lead every one in his own particular thither.

Queſt. Where is the faithful miniſter that teacheth otherwiſe, or practiſeth otherwiſe at this day? I am ſure I never met with any thing of this nature from any of them, but only one that ran out in his own particular, who firſt endeavoured to draw me from eſteeming or taking directions from others, and then would have given me directions himſelf, and would ſpeak and undertake to propheſy great things of me, that he might have raiſed up that part in me, which could have anſwered him. And though he himſelf be dead, yet his ſpirit is alive in others at this day, which the Lord diſcover and preſerve his people from!

Further Confirm. It is not good to make haſte to be rich (no not in religion). He that rightly believeth, and abideth in the true and living faith, makes not haſte to run into knowledge, worſhips, and performances, before he feel his guide; but rather chooſeth to be as a weaned child, lying low before the Lord, in brokenneſs of ſpirit, and not meddling with things too high for him; and ſo he is kept in innocency, poverty, and humility before the Lord, and preſerved out of the bed of the ſtranger, (the ſtrange ſpirit and power) and ſo not judged or condemned by the Lord, for either ſpiritual adultery or idolatry.

Queſt. But he that lets in a wrong ſpirit, that miſtakes about the light in him, and judgeth that which is indeed darkneſs to be it, and errs from the true church, and denies the authority of God's Spirit and power in it, and is not preſerved thereby, but entangled and bewitched with this wrong ſpirit, and in it teſtifies againſt the true church and the true Spirit, and the miniſtry and miniſters of Chriſt; is not he joined to the ſpirit of whoredom in his own particular? And hath not he ſet up an idol in his own heart, inſtead of the true light there? And doth not he worſhip and obey that idol, that wrong ſpirit, that wrong power? And will not the Lord viſit and judge him for his ſpiritual adultery and idolatry from the true?

The

The next Citation.

'IN the apoſtles days, Chriſtians were too apt to 'ſtrive after a wrong unity and uniformity in 'outward practices and obſervations, and to judge one 'another unrighteouſly in theſe things. And mark, 'it is not the different practice from one another that 'breaks the peace and unity, but the judging one 'another becauſe of differing practices. He that 'keeps not a day, may unite in the ſame Spirit, in the 'ſame life, in the ſame love with him that keeps a 'day; and he who keeps a day, may unite in heart 'and ſoul with the ſame Spirit and life in him who 'keeps not a day; but he that judgeth the other be-'cauſe of either of theſe, errs from the Spirit, from 'the love, from the life, and ſo breaks the bond of 'unity. And he that draws another to any practice, 'before the life in his own particular lead him, doth 'as much as in him lies to deſtroy the ſoul of that 'perſon. This was the apoſtle's rule, for every one 'to perform ſingly to the Lord what he did, and not 'for one to meddle with the light or conſcience of 'another, &c. but every one to keep cloſe to their 'own meaſure, &c. and here is the true unity in the 'Spirit, in the inward life, and not in an outward 'uniformity; that was not neceſſary in the apoſtles 'days, nor is it neceſſary now: and that eye, which 'ſo dotes upon it, overlooks the one thing which is 'neceſſary.'

Confirm. This is ſo manifeſt from that ſcripture quoted by me, which is here omitted, that he that ſhall read that ſcripture, which is Rom. xiv. may eaſily obſerve the apoſtle affirming and teaching theſe things.

That even in the apoſtles days, Chriſtians were too apt to ſtrive after a wrong unity and uniformity in outward practices and obſervations, and to judge one another unrighteouſly in theſe things, is manifeſt from

the ſeveral inſtructions and exhortations given to this church, in this chap. as ver. 2, 3, 4. "One believeth "that he may eat all things; another who is weak "eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him "that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, "judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. "Who art thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant? "To his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth; yea, he "ſhall be holden up, for God is able to make him "ſtand."

Yea, in matters of worſhip, (as keeping and obſerving a day to God, or not keeping it) it is not the different practice from one another that breaks the peace, but the judging of one another, becauſe of differing practices. So the apoſtle plainly holds forth, ver. 5, 6. "One man eſteemeth one day above an-"other; another eſteemeth every day. Let every man "be fully perſuaded in his own mind. He that re-"gardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and "he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth "not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, "for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, "to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."

And he that draws another to any practice, before the life in his own particular lead him, doth as much as in him lies to deſtroy the ſoul of that perſon. So the apoſtle ſignifies, ver. 5. (which was quoted in my book) in that he ſaith, "Deſtroy not him with thy "meat," for whom Chriſt died. So that not an outward uniformity in all things, but an unity in the one Spirit and life, is the neceſſary thing. And there may be unity, and love, and life, and peace, without an uniformity in practice, further than the Spirit of God teacheth and leadeth his unto.

Queſt. But if the Lord hath taught a man, opened the ſame eye in him that he opened in others, and brought him into unity and uniformity with the church, in the practices which the Lord hath taught it; and he afterwards let in another ſpirit, and fall from theſe practices, and judge the very church itſelf for

for continuing in them; may not the church teſtify to this perſon, that he is erred from his guide, hath loſt the light in himſelf, and ſo judgeth amiſs, both concerning himſelf, and concerning the church of God? This hath been the ſtate of ſome who went out from among us formerly, and may alſo be the ſtate of ſome who go out from us now. For as there is one that gathers to the true church; ſo there is another that endeavours to draw and ſcatter from it, and then to cauſe men to turn head againſt it, as if it were not of God, but apoſtatized from the Spirit and principle of truth, which indeed is their own ſtate and condition in God's ſight; but not the church's, which was gathered and preſerved by him, glory to the Lord, over all the accuſations of the accuſer, through what mouth ſoever he utter them forth.

The next Citation.

'OH! how ſweet and pleaſant is it to the truly 'ſpiritual eye, to ſee ſeveral ſorts of believers, 'ſeveral forms of Chriſtians in the ſchool of Chriſt, 'every one learning their own leſſon, performing their 'own peculiar ſervice, and knowing, owning, and 'loving one another in their ſeveral places, and dif-'ferent performances to their Maſter, to whom they 'are to give an account, and not to quarrel one with 'another about their different practices! This is the 'true ground of love and unity, not that ſuch a man 'walks and does juſt as I do, but becauſe I feel the 'ſame Spirit of life in him, and that he walks in his 'rank, in his own order, in his proper way and place 'of ſubjection to that. And this is far more pleaſing 'to me, than if he walked juſt in the track wherein I 'walk; nay, (ſo far as I am ſpiritual) I cannot ſo 'much as deſire that he ſhould do ſo, until he be par-'ticularly led thereto, by the ſame Spirit that led 'me.'

Confirm. The ſpiritual eye beholdeth things aright, beholdeth things in the Lord, and taſteth ſweetneſs therein, and is pleaſed with that which is ſpiritual. If every one did eye the Lord, ſubject to the Lord, anſwer the light and Spirit of the Lord in their own hearts, though the forms in the ſchool of Chriſt be higher or lower, the leſſons different, and the practices anſwerable, yet every one minding his own place and leſſon, and performing his own peculiar ſervice, the ſpiritual eye would be delighted therewith. And thoſe that are of the true ſeed and birth do know, own, and love one another in their ſeveral places, and different performances to their Maſter, to whom they are to give an account; and do not quarrel with one another about their different performances. Oh! how ſweetly is this practiſed and experienced among us at this day!

And unity in the life is the ground of true brotherly love and fellowſhip. Not that another man walks juſt as I do; but though he be weaker or ſtronger, yet he walks by the ſame principle of light, and is felt in the ſame Spirit of life, which guideth both the weak and the ſtrong, in their ſeveral ranks, order, proper way, and place of ſubjection, to that one Spirit of life and truth, which all are to be ſubject to.

Nay, he that is truly ſpiritual and ſtrong in the light and Spirit of the Lord, cannot deſire that the weak ſhould walk juſt as he does; but only as they are ſtrengthened, taught, and led thereunto, by the ſame Spirit that ſtrengthened, taught, and led him.

Queſt. This is true concerning every one that is in the faith, that is in the true light, that is in the true Spirit; and keeps his rank, order, place, and ſubjection, though in a weak and low degree; but will this hold good concerning any that have erred from the faith, have made ſhipwreck thereof, and have turned from the true light and Spirit in themſelves, and left their rank, order, and teſtimony againſt the world, and are again become one with the world, even in thoſe very practices which the ſpirit of the world delights in,

in, and which the Spirit of the Lord hath teſtified, and ſtill teſtifieth againſt, in all that are faithful, and keep to their firſt love and light? Is the church to bear with theſe in their practices, or own ſuch ſpirits, or believe that they now walk according to the light which firſt convinced them? Is not the Spirit of judgment with the church? Hath not God given her diſcerning? Hath ſhe not power and authority from God to try ſpirits? Yea, and to judge falſe ſpirits, that have loſt their habitation in the light, though they may ſtill pretend to dwell there; can ſhe not try thoſe which ſay they are Jews and are not, but have loſt the light, Spirit, and power which circumciſeth, and keepeth circumciſed, and are run back into the uncircumciſed paths of the world again, which came from, and anſwer the uncircumciſed ſpirit and nature, both in themſelves and others?

The next Citation.

'AND he that knows what it is to receive any 'truths from the Spirit, and to be led into any 'practices by the Spirit, and how prone the fleſhly 'part is to make haſte, and how dangerous that haſte 'is, will not be forward to preſs his knowledge or 'practices upon others, but rather wait patiently till 'the Lord fit them for the receiving thereof, and fear 'leſt they ſhould receive and practiſe too ſoon, even 'in that part which cannot ſerve the Lord.'

Confirm. I will ſend the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, ſaith Chriſt to his diſciples, and he ſhall lead you into all truth. Now the diſciple of Chriſt is led into truth, in the croſs to that part wherein others may receive the notion of things; yea, perhaps of truth itſelf. And the diſciple muſt alſo abide in the croſs, after that the Lord hath given him the true knowledge, or he cannot be rightly led into the practice of what he knows. So that the diſciple comes very

very hardly, both by his knowledge, and by his ability to practiſe, what the Spirit of God teacheth him, and requireth of him. There is a fleſhly part indeed, prone to make haſte; but that haſte is dangerous, and that fleſhly part, in all its haſty deſires and motions, is to be denied, and kept down. And he that is diligent in denying and keeping down that fleſhly part in himſelf (with the forwardneſs and haſtineſs thereof) cannot eaſily be forward to preſs his knowledge and practices upon others; but will be patiently waiting on the Lord, for their kindly and ſeaſonable underſtanding of the truth, and growth in it; and fear, leſt they ſhould run before their guide, and be practiſing too ſoon even in that part which cannot ſerve the Lord; for the Lord muſt be ſerved and worſhipped in his Spirit and truth; and thither are all to be directed and brought, and there is every mind to be ſtayed and kept, or it cannot worſhip and ſerve aright.

Queſt. But what if a man entertain a wrong ſpirit, and let go the truths he had received, and turn from the practices which God's Spirit taught him, into the ſpirit and practices of the world, which God's Spirit hath teſtified and will for ever teſtify againſt? Is not the church to deny this ſpirit, and theſe practices, and the perſon that hath hearkened to this ſpirit, and is found in theſe practices? That he may turn from this ſpirit and practices, to the true Spirit, and to the true teſtimony and practices which it once taught him, and ſtill teacheth all that hearken to its voice and holy motions, and liſten not to the voice and inſtigations of a ſtranger.

The next Citation.

'THE great error of the ſtate of the apoſtaſy, 'hath been to ſet up an outward order and 'uniformity, and to make mens conſciences bend 'thereto, either by arguments of wiſdom, or by 'force; but the property of the true church govern-'ment

'ment is, to leave the conſcience to its full liberty in 'the Lord, to preſerve it ſingle and entire for the 'Lord to exerciſe, and to ſeek unity in the light, and 'in the Spirit, walking ſweetly and harmoniouſly to-'gether in the midſt of differing practices.'

Confirm. That there have been ages of apoſtaſy from the true Spirit and power of the apoſtles, is very manifeſt, both by the doctrines, diſcipline, and cruel practices of thoſe, that would have themſelves accounted the true church, and true believers and Chriſtians. And that they have ſet up an outward order and conformity, and have uſed both arguments of wiſdom, and alſo force, to make mens conſciences to bend thereto; this is as manifeſt as the former. Now that this has been an error, and a great error, is very manifeſt alſo; becauſe it is contrary to the nature of conſcience, which is to be led by God's Spirit, not bent by man's wiſdom and conſtraint, and contrary to Chriſt and his apoſtles doctrine and practice, who would have every man fully perſuaded of what he performs to God, from whom he muſt receive the reward and approbation, or the diſlike and puniſhment, for his anſwering or diſobeying the light which God ſets up, or cauſeth to ſhine, in his own conſcience.

And the property of the true church government, and the practice and path of the true church in theſe our days, is to leave the conſcience to its full liberty in the Lord; to preſerve it ſingle and entire for the Lord, and to ſeek unity in the light and in the Spirit, walking ſweetly and harmoniouſly together in the midſt of differing practices. Nay, it is not the deſire of the church at this day, that any ſhould come up into the practice, or holy order of the goſpel, according to what the Lord hath taught others, but only as the Lord teacheth and leadeth them.

Queſt. Concerning what conſcience is this to be underſtood? Is it to be underſtood of the tender and weak conſcience? Or of the hard and ſeared conſcience? For the conſcience which God once made tender

der, may afterwards come to be ſeared and hardened. And is the church of Chriſt, which is guided by the Spirit and wiſdom of God, taught and required by him ſo to act towards the hard and ſeared conſcience, as it is towards the tender and weak conſcience? Is the hard and ſeared conſcience, which hath forſaken the true light, Spirit, and power, and turned againſt the truth, and is in a wrong, ſtiff, wilful, hardened liberty and ſubtilty, to be left to its liberty, and to that ſpirit which draweth it out and hardeneth it in a wrong liberty? Can there be any unity, in the light and in the Spirit, had with thoſe who are erred from the light and from the Spirit, and are deceived in their own hearts concerning it, and do but only pretend to it? Can they walk ſweetly and harmoniouſly together in differing practices, who differ alſo in the ground, and are not one in the foundation, even in the true light and Spirit of the Lord? Ought not the church to judge this ſpirit, with its liberty and evil conſcience, (for that ſpirit will make the conſciences of all that let it in, evil) as well as, to the utmoſt, to cheriſh the liberty of the tender conſciences in and to the Lord? Read and conſider theſe ſcriptures following, Tit. i. 15. 1 Tim. i. 19. and iv. 2.

The next Citation.

'AND this I can truly ſay concerning myſelf, I 'never found my ſpirit forward to draw any, 'either to any thing I believed to be true, or to any 'practice or way of worſhip I obſerved or walked in; 'but deſired that the power and leadings of life 'might go before them, and I was afraid leſt men 'ſhould receive things from my hand, and not from 'the Lord's.' *He hath written in the margin of the book he ſent me,* 'Oh! what a tender ſpirit was here!' *intimating as if it were not ſo with me now.*

Confirm.

Confirm. Bleſſed be the Lord, it was ſo with me formerly, and is ſo with me daily more and more; for as I wait on the Lord in his truth, which makes tender; ſo upon this occaſion, being forced to it, I cannot but confeſs, that I witneſs the Lord daily more and more uniting my ſpirit to him in his truth; and as truth increaſeth, ſo the tenderneſs which comes from it ſtill increaſeth in me, and I do not (nay, I may ſay cannot, the contrary is ſo written on my heart) ſo much as deſire to drive any to what practice or way of worſhip I believe to be true, and am taught of God to obſerve; but this is the longing of my ſoul, that the power and leadings of life may go before them; and I daily behave myſelf as one that is afraid, leſt men ſhould receive things from my hand, and not from the Lord's.

Queſt. Yet, where I find perſons manifeſtly warp and turn aſide from the truth, and let in a wrong thing, and teſtify againſt the truth and way of the Lord, and their hearts hardened by the ſubtilty of him who hath deceived them; may I not ſingly and faithfully teſtify it to them, and breathe to the Lord for them, that they may return to the true Spirit, and to the holy teſtimony and practices thereof, and not condemn ſuch, as departers from the light and truth, who abide in it, nor juſtify themſelves as abiding in it, when they are really departed from it?

His laſt citation of words of mine is out of another book, entitled, 'An Anſwer to the common Objec-'tion,' &c. p. 8. The words are theſe:

'THAT power therefore in the church which 'ſpares the hypocrites, (who can eaſily comply 'with an outward conformity in worſhip, without 'feeling an inward life and virtue) but lights heavy 'on that which is tender and ſhy in matters of wor-'ſhip, that is not the true church power, but at beſt 'but a counterfeit of the true.'

Confirm.

Confirm. The power which Chriſt hath given his church is not to ſpare hypocrites, who may eaſily comply with an outward uniformity in worſhip, without feeling an inward life and virtue. And ſuch are not ſpared, but ſmote at, by the Spirit and power of God among us very often. And oh! that there were no hypocrites and formal ſpirits among us; but that all that profeſs the truth were in the truth, and ſubject to it, and did live the life of it! Nor doth the true church power light heavy on that which is tender and ſhy in matters of worſhip; but the miniſtry of the true church is to the conſcience, as in God's ſight, and is very tender of it, as before him, to whom it is to give an account of the ſpiritual power it hath received from him, and of the exerciſe of it. That power therefore which ſpares the hypocrites, and lights heavy on that which is tender and ſhy in matters of worſhip, to be ſure is not the true church power, but at beſt but a counterfeit of the true.

Queſt. But that power in the church which doth not ſpare hypocrites, but is very gentle and tender to all tender conſciences, is not that the true church power? And who is the hypocrite? Is not he that pretendeth to the light, when he is departed from it, an hypocrite? And he which ſetteth up that which he calls light in himſelf, and denieth that which is indeed true light, and which iſſueth forth from God's Holy Spirit in his church, is not he an hypocrite? And hath not the church power to judge all his falſe pretences, and to try his ſpirit by the true light and Spirit of the Lord Jeſus, which is ſtill preſent with the true church? If the Spirit of Chriſt be indeed preſent with his church, ſurely it cannot but have power and authority to try, judge, and condemn every thing that is of a contrary ſpirit and nature, in all falſe pretenders whatſoever; who by their pretences to the true light, cannot ſhelter that which is indeed contrary to it from the holy and righteous judgment of the Spirit and power of God in his church.

Thus I have gone over theſe ſeveral citations of John Pennyman's, and punctually ſet them down as he

he had cited them, and ſpoken more words to the confirmation of them, to manifeſt to others, as I find it plainly with me before the Lord, that I am fully the ſame at this day, in the ſenſe and belief of my heart, as I was then; believing the ſame truth, and as ready to hold it forth, if the Lord at any time ſhall call me unto it, as I was then. But I was not then againſt true church government; nor did intend this to encourage any man to ſhelter himſelf, by a pretence in the light in himſelf, againſt true church government; aſſuredly knowing that the ſpirit of the prophets is ſubject to the prophets; and that he that is truly ſubject to the light and Spirit of God in his own heart, will be taught thereby to be ſubject to it alſo in others. For the life, Spirit, and power of God doth not riſe in vain in any; and he that hath the true ear open, will hear its voice in whomſoever it ſpeaks; and he that doth not hear its voice, when it ſpeaks through any to him, doth not hear with the circumciſed ear, nor underſtand with the circumciſed heart. So that John Pennyman, in citing theſe my words, as if in ſo writing I was againſt the true church government, or ſetting up the government of any particular man (upon any pretence whatſoever) above the ſenſe, underſtanding, and judgment of the true church, does me great wrong, even before the Lord, who knoweth that it was otherwiſe with me in that day; and he greatly wrongeth my words, which did not ſignify any ſuch thing: for in the very ſame book, and in ſome of the pages which he quotes, there is expreſſed a ſenſe of, and a teſtimony to, the true church government, which I am aſſured the Spirit of the Lord will give forth, and lead his into, as the neceſſities and occaſions of the church require. For as the Lord is not wanting to the particular, ſo will he not be wanting to the general: but he is faithful, who hath promiſed to be with his church and people, who wait upon him, and look up to him for the light and judgment of his Spirit in things wherein he engageth them,

them, and which require their ſingle diſcerning and judgment in.

To manifeſt, therefore, from this very book, what my belief was, and how hearty I was to church government, and ſenſible of the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of it, I ſhall recite ſome paſſages out of it.

Firſt, I ſhall mention the title of that part of my book, which had John Pennyman expreſſed fully, as it is in the title-page, is thus: 'Whereunto ſomewhat is 'added about the authority and government which 'Chriſt excluded out of his church; which occaſioneth 'ſomewhat concerning the true church government.'

This might have poiſed peoples ſpirits in the reading of his *Citations*, from judging me to direct men to the ſetting up of any thing in their minds and conſciences which they may call light, in oppoſition to the light and Spirit of God in his church, or to ſet up a private judgment in themſelves, above the light and judgment of God's Spirit in the church. For as the church is to be tender of every member, ſo every member is to be tender and regardful towards the church, and of the power and authority which God hath given it.

The next Paſſage that is on me to mention, is p. 76.

'There is nothing to hurt in the mountain of 'God's holineſs; but there is a righteous ſceptre, a 'ſweet ſceptre, a ſpiritual ſceptre, which reacheth the 'ſpirit in the power of life, but toucheth not the 'outward man. To which I may add, The power of the church is not to hurt the outward man; nay, nor the ſoul neither: but is for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the ſoul may be ſaved. And when the church hath teſtified againſt their practices, or denied their ſpirit, it leaves them to the Lord; yet ſtill praying to him that repentance may be given them, and mercy ſhewn them by him, whoſe mercy endures for ever.

Another

Another Paſſage in p. 77.

'Let the life in every one riſe over it' (ſpeaking of the proud aſpiring ſpirit) 'and trample upon it: and 'afterwards, that in thee may ariſe which is fit to 'teach, yea, and to rule in the Lord,' &c.

P. 78. The example of Chriſt is urged, who did not exerciſe a wrong authority over his diſciples, though he was their Lord and Maſter, which ſignified both greatneſs above them, and authority over them, ſee *line* 15. 'Yet Chriſt took not upon him this kind 'of greatneſs, nor did exerciſe this kind of autho-'rity; but he was a ſervant,' &c. and did miniſter.

So that there was one kind of greatneſs and authority which Chriſt did not exerciſe, and which his church alſo is not to meddle with: but there was another kind of authority which he had, and which he, who hath all power in heaven and earth, giveth to his church, to partake with him in, and to act in his name.

But why ſhould I mention any ſuch ſmall touches at the thing, when it is directly ſpoken to in a *Queſtion* propounded, and the *Anſwer* thereto, p. 79, 80, &c.? I ſhall therefore ſet down the *Queſtion*, and part of the *Anſwer* thereto; the whole being too long to be here inſerted.

Queſt. 'But is there to be no greatneſs, no autho-'rity, among the diſciples of Jeſus, or in the church 'of Chriſt? Is every one to do what he will, to be 'ſubject to his own fancies and imaginations, to the 'inventions of his own corrupt heart? What a con-'fuſed building will this be? Surely this will not 'long remain a Sion, but ſoon become a Babylon, 'even a heap of diſorder and confuſion.'

Anſw. There is to be no ſuch kind of greatneſs, no ſuch kind of authority; yet there is both a greatneſs

and authority ſuitable to the ſtate of diſciples; ſuitable to that kind of kingdom whereof they are. There are laws, there are governments, there are governors, there is a ruling, and there is a ſubjection; but all in the Spirit, all ſuitable to that which is to be governed; but no government of, or according to, the fleſh. As Chriſt's kingdom is not of this world, ſo the government of his church and people is not according to the world: but as that which gathers is his Spirit, and that which is gathered is ſpiritual, ſo that which is governed is the ſpirits of his people, and they are to be governed by his Spirit, and ſpiritually, and not after a fleſhly manner. Thus Chriſt himſelf, though he miniſtered to his diſciples, yet he alſo was their Lord and Maſter, and in the Spirit and life of the Father ruled over them; and thus the apoſtles, and other miniſters of Chriſt, had likewiſe in the Spirit the care of the churches, and authority in the Lord by his Spirit to govern the ſpirits of his people: not to govern after a fleſhly manner, by their own wills, nor to preſcribe to them in a lordly way, either what they ſhould believe or practiſe; but in the light and in the power of the Spirit, to make their way into every one's conſcience in the ſight of God, miniſtering to every one in the Spirit according to their capacity and growth, and waiting patiently for God to convey the food and nouriſhment, and to build their ſpirits up in the faith thereby.

The ſpirit of the prophets is ſubject to the prophets. Here is the government; here is the law of rule and ſubjection in the life. Every one feeling a meaſure of the Spirit in himſelf, is thereby taught to own and ſubject to a greater meaſure of the ſame Spirit in another. He that hath no meaſure of the Spirit of God, he is not of God, he is none of Chriſt's: and he that hath received a meaſure of the Spirit, in the ſame Spirit feels another's meaſure, and owneth it in its place and ſervice, and knoweth its moving, and cannot quench it, but giveth way to it with joy and delight. When the Spirit moves in any one to ſpeak, the

the ſame Spirit moves in the other to be ſubject and give way: and ſo every one keeping to his own meaſure in the Spirit, here can be no diſorder, but true ſubjection of every ſpirit: and where this is wanting, it cannot be ſupplied by any outward rule or order ſet up in the church by common conſent; for that is fleſhly, and lets in the fleſh, and deſtroys the true order, rule, and ſubjection.

And then to limit the government aright, theſe two precious cautions or directions are added, pag. 85. which I am ſure will anſwer the truth and witneſs of God in every conſcience.

Firſt, *Care muſt be had that nothing govern in the church of Chriſt, but the Spirit of Chriſt.*

Secondly, *That the conſcience be kept tender, that nothing be received but according to the light in the conſcience.*

There is likewiſe an *Objection* anſwered about *Uniformity*, p. 87, 88. which not being very large, and tending further to open the ſenſe of my heart in this thing, I ſhall alſo here annex.

Obj. *But is not uniformity lovely; and doth not the apoſtle exhort Chriſtians to be of one mind; and were it not a ſweet thing if we were all of one heart, and one way?*

Anſw. Yea, uniformity is very lovely, and to be deſired and waited for, as the Spirit of the Lord, which is one, leads and draws into one. But for the fleſhly part (the wiſe reaſoning part of man) by fleſhly ways and means to ſtrive to bring about a fleſhly uniformity, which inſnares and overbears the tender conſcience, this is not lovely, nor ſpiritual, nor Chriſtian. And the apoſtle who exhorts Chriſtians to be of one mind, yet doth not bid them force one another into one mind, but walk together ſweetly ſo far as they had

attained; and wherein they were otherwiſe minded, God in his due time would reveal more to them, Phil. iii. 15, 16. He that hath, to him ſhall be given. And the intent and work of the miniſtry (with the ſeveral miniſtrations of it) is to bring into the unity (Epheſ. iv. 13.) as perſons are able to follow, and not to force all men into one practice or way; that is the way to deſtroy the faith, and the true unity, and at beſt can introduce but a fleſhly appearance of unity in ſuch a form of worſhip and godlineſs as eats out the power. And for being of one heart, and one way, bleſſed be the Lord, this is in meaſure known and witneſſed. The way is one; Chriſt the truth of God; and he that is in the faith, and in the obedience to that light which ſhines from his Spirit into the heart of every believer, hath a taſte of the one heart and of the one way; and knoweth that no variety of practices (which is of God) can make a breach in the true unity. This is the one way, for every one to be ſubject to that light of Chriſt's Spirit which he hath received from Chriſt; and every one keeping here, there is alſo one heart kept in the midſt of all the variety and diverſity of practices. And the unity being thus kept, all will come into one outwardly alſo at length, as the light grows in every one, and as every one grows into the light: but this muſt be patiently waited for from the hand of God (who hath the right way of affecting it, and who alone can do it) and not harſhly and cruelly attempted by the rough hand of man.

Now I deſire all that would not injure and wrong another (in taking part of one's ſenſe and mind, and concealing the other) to obſerve how ſerious my heart is in the ſight of the Lord concerning church-government, and unity and uniformity among the people of the Lord, in the Spirit and power of the Lord, as the Lord ſhall pleaſe rightly and orderly to bring it forth, and not otherwiſe. And my words ſo plainly ſignifying, and holding forth this, Oh! how will J. Penny-

man

man anſwer it to the great God, for thus miſrepreſenting me, and ſtriving to make my words ſignify that which they never did, and as a proof how contrary our doctrine was then, to what it hath been of late years; whereas, in that very book he cites, my words are full concerning church-government, the authority of the church, and the duty of ſubjection to it in the life, as was before recited.

I have been in a great travail of ſpirit for J. Pennyman, the Lord having ſhewed me his ſpirit and ſtate (as he hath alſo done to many others, who abide in this pure holy light which he hath forſaken, and is departed from); and this hath been the cry of my heart to the God and Father of my life for him, in great brokenneſs and tears, many times; *Father, forgive him, for he knows not what he does. He knows not what Spirit and power he acts againſt, nor what Spirit and power it is that leads him. Oh! that he might ſee it, and turn from it, and live! And oh! that all that err, and are miſtaken in judgment, might have a ſenſe of that which is truth indeed, and of that which is darkneſs indeed in their own hearts; and might not put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs, as too many now do, to the great hurt of their own ſouls, and the hardening of others againſt God's precious way and truth, which will be bitterneſs in the latter end unto all ſuch!*

THREE OR FOUR

CONSIDERATIONS

ADDED, CONCERNING

CHURCH-GOVERNMENT.

Firſt, THAT it is the holy will and pleaſure of the great God, that his church ſhould be governed by his Holy Spirit and power revealed in it. God is the God of order, and not of confuſion, and he would have every thing in the right and holy order every where, eſpecially in his church. He hath given a meaſure of his good Spirit to every man, and he would have every man governed thereby: and he hath given more of his good Spirit and holy power to his church than to any particular, and he would have his church governed thereby. Read the epiſtles of Chriſt to the churches in the ſecond and third chapters of the Revelations, and ſee how government and care over their members is expected from them. A church is a gathering in the name, power, and authority of the Moſt High; and Chriſt, to whom God gave all power in heaven and earth, is in them, and with them. God knows they can do nothing without his power; and he is faithful who hath appointed them to meet together in his name, and he will not fail them. How hath this been experienced in former days! And how has this been experienced in this our day, bleſſed be the name of our God! The life that ſprings in the church, the light that ſhines in the church, the power and preſence of the Lord that is revealed in his church, oh! how glorious

glorious is it? God hath not gathered nor preſerved a people through ſo many trials, nor ſo exerciſed and built them up in his pure fear, Holy Spirit, and living truth, to leave them ſo ſuddenly, and caſt them off, as ſome men vainly imagine; but as the Lord hath thrown down that which ſhall never be built up more, ſo the Lord hath built up that which ſhall never be thrown down more, and brought many of his people to a ſettled ſtate, in the unchangeable truth and power.

Secondly, It is the great work of Satan, and the great intereſt of Satan, to oppoſe the holy order and government of the Spirit of Chriſt in his church. It is that power which threw down his kingdom, and that power will keep his kingdom down; yea, the more that authority and power is eſtabliſhed in the church, the more he is ſeen through, and his ſtrength and ſubtilty avail nothing before the wiſdom and power of God revealed in his church. And this we have obſerved, and may obſerve, in this our day, the judgment of the church, the life in the church, the light that hath ſtayed with the church and holy gathering, while particulars ſometimes have been miſtaken, and erred about the light in themſelves, have been a ſtay to thoſe that have hearkened to her voice, and a means to help to recover thoſe, who through the ſtrength of the temptation, and their too confident leaning to that which they took for the light within, and not conſulting with thoſe whom God had ordained to be an help to the weak, and had a clearer eye-ſight and underſtanding in the truth than themſelves; I ſay, the light that hath ſtayed with the church, hath been a help to recover ſuch who have miſtaken in judgment, and erred from the light in their own particulars.

Thirdly, There is great benefit and ſafety to every particular in the holy order and government which God hath ordained in his church. God knoweth it is not fit for believers or his gathered ones to be alone, and therefore he hath appointed, that by the ſame power and Spirit which gathered them, they ſhould be added to the church which he hath already gathered. And

then they are in the place where God takes care of them; where the Lord God appears; where the Lord God dwells. For as he dwelt outwardly in the national church of the Jews, ſo he dwells inwardly in the ſpiritual church, and gathering of believers. There life is in its unity and ſtrength; there light ſhines as in its proper place; there the Shepherd is who keeps the ſheep from erring; there the leading power, the preſerving power, the ordering power, is daily waiting for, and experienced in its brightneſs and clearneſs. "Woe "is to him that is alone;" but bleſſings are upon him who is in unity with God's holy gathered people, and is in the ſenſe of, and under the guidance of, that Spirit which is continually preſent with them. And as we have witneſſed bleſſings in our firſt gathering, as we were gathered and joined to the light, Spirit, and power of the holy God in our own particulars, ſo we have witneſſed bleſſings in our unity with the life in the body. Oh! how every motion of life is felt here! How the wiſdom and power of God is revealed here! What help is adminiſtered to every member there! How is the knitting in the life, and the flowing of the life and holy power from veſſel to veſſel, daily experienced there! So that every one is quickened with the pure life; every one ſeaſoned with the pure ſalt; every virgin anointed with the holy ointment; every one leavened with the leaven which unleavens to ſin and Satan, and leavens to God. Indeed my ſoul daily bleſſeth the Lord, not only that he hath viſited me, but brought me into the holy living ſociety; and that daily the Lord vouchſafeth to give me to partake of their life and Spirit, in which life and Spirit I have unity with them, and love them, and honour them, and not out of it. Oh! praiſes, and everlaſting honour, and renown to the Lord my God, who hath remembered me with the favour he bears to his people, and hath ſo viſited me with his ſalvation, that he hath given me to ſee the good of his choſen, and cauſed my poor, deſolate, mourning ſoul to rejoice in the gladneſs of his nation, and to glory in him with his inheritance.

Glorious

Glorious things were ſpoken of the church under the law; a glorious power and preſence was with that outward people, under that outward covenant; but this was but a ſhadow of the glory that was to be revealed in the church of the new covenant, and of the preſence and power of the living God, that was to be manifeſted and dwell there. And indeed it is manifeſted, indeed it doth dwell there, and thoſe that are the begotten, and born, and preſerved by God's Holy Spirit, and power of the immortal Word of life, daily witneſs it.

Fourthly, The glory and beauty of the New-Teſtament-church doth in no ſmall degree conſiſt in the holy order and government of them, as a ſpiritual living body, by the bleſſed Spirit and power of the Lord.

There were four things wherein the glory of the church of the Jews under the covenant did much conſiſt.

The *firſt* was, in the ſalvation wherewith God viſited them, and which he beſtowed upon them. "Happy "art thou, O Iſrael! Who is like to thee, O people "ſaved by the Lord, the ſhield of thy help, and who "is the ſword of thine excellency. And thine enemies "ſhall be found liars unto thee, and thou ſhalt tread "upon their high-places," Deut. xxxiii. 29.

Secondly, In the gifts God beſtowed upon them; for God did adorn and beautify that people with the good things which he beſtowed upon them, Ezek. xvi. 14.

Thirdly, In the preſence of the Lord their God in the midſt of them, the ark of whoſe preſence was with them, and whoſe dwelling-place was among them, and who was nigh unto them to be enquired of by them, and to anſwer and ſupply them with all that they wanted and called upon him for, Deut. iv. 7.

Fourthly, In the holy ſtatutes and righteous judgments which God gave them to be ordained and governed by, as his choſen people, ver. 5, 6, and 8.

Now all theſe are much more fulfilled in the New-Teſtament-church; for,

Firſt,

Firſt, There is the ſalvation witneſſed, which this outward ſalvation of this outward people was but a figure of. There the everlaſting arm of God's power is revealed in an inward and ſpiritual way and manner, to deſtroy the enemies of a man's own houſe, to redeem from Satan, to cut Rahab, to wound the dragon inwardly, and to defend his gathered people from the inroads of his ſtrength, and from the ſubtilty of his temptations.

Secondly, The Lord doth give great gifts to his churches; he bleſſeth them with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things in Chriſt. Mark the diverſity of gifts, and diverſity of manifeſtations, which God gave to his churches in the apoſtles days, 1 Cor. xii. 4, &c.

Thirdly, There was God's preſence revealed; there Chriſt was in the midſt, whenever they were gathered together in his name. Every church (as well as that of the Epheſians) was built up together an habitation of God through the Spirit, Epheſ. ii. 22. Yea, Chriſt was head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all, chap. i. 22, 23. Yea, they were, and are, the temple of the living God, in which God would dwell and walk, and be their God, and they his people, 2 Cor. vi. 16.

Fourthly, The holy order of his own Spirit and life God will not fail to reveal unto them, that they may walk in the Spirit of the goſpel, in the power of the goſpel, in the order of the goſpel, and the holy government of God's Spirit and power may ſhine in the midſt of them, and that God may bleſs them as an habitation of juſtice, and mountain of holineſs, Jer. xxi. 23.

The church is a body; every particular ſoul that is renewed, quickened, and kept alive, is a member. Now every member needs the preſence and power of that Spirit which quickened it, to nouriſh, keep alive, and order it. And the church hath much more need of the Spirit to be preſent with it, to guide and order it, and keep it in the holy order, power, and government of life. And this order and holy government in the Spirit

Spirit and power of the Lord was brought forth in the apoſtles days: for the apoſtles did rejoice in it concerning that church of Coloſſe, who joyed beholding their order, and the ſtedfaſtneſs of their faith in Chriſt, Coloſſ. ii. 5. For the apoſtles and miniſters of Chriſt did ſet things in order in that day, Tit. i. 5. 1 Cor. xi. 34. and it was their joy to ſee that order obſerved, and their grief when they were unruly, and would not be ſubject to the holy order and government of the church, 1 Theſſ. v. 14. Tit. i. 10. And the church of Corinth, though it fell ſhort in no gift, yet falling ſhort in order, it did not arrive at the glory of ſome other churches.

The ſpiritual Solomon, who is full of the wiſdom of God, oh! the bleſſed order and holy government that he brings forth among his church and people! How doth God eſtabliſh Jeruſalem, and make her a praiſe in the earth, but by the holy order and bleſſed government of his Spirit, governing her as a church, as a ſpiritual body, by his own pure wiſdom, which no other government or order can come near? And truly my heart hath been often affected and filled with a raviſhing joy, when I have beheld the heavenly and bleſſed order and government which the Lord God of wiſdom hath already brought forth among us, and guided us in, to the comfort and refreſhment of many, and to the injury and hurt of none, neither without nor within. And indeed we do not deſire any greatneſs or authority of man; but only of the Lord our God in the midſt of us, that all men may be but his ſervants and miniſters in the church, and to the church, for the good of the church. No, no; this is the day of the Lord, of the ſetting up and exalting of his power in the church, which the church waiteth for, and knoweth the appearance of, and cannot bear the exaltation of man (of man's ſpirit, wiſdom, power, and authority) inſtead of the Lord's. Yet nothing that cometh from the Lord, from his pure life and Spirit in any, muſt be rejected: and if the Lord pleaſe to make uſe of thoſe whom he did make uſe of to gather home to himſelf; I ſay, if he hath given them gifts, and pleaſe to make uſe of them

alſo

alſo in building up, and manifeſting the holy order of his Holy Spirit and power, the Lord muſt not be reſiſted or withſtood therein; but whatever comes from him muſt be received with thankfulneſs, through what inſtrument ſoever he pleaſe to convey it.

Object. *But have I not been taught to be ſubject to the light in my own heart, and to make that my judge? And is not this another, or new, or different doctrine from that, now to tell me I muſt ſubject to the light of God's Spirit in his church? Suppoſe that which the church requires, or orders, or holds forth, be different from my light, or be not yet revealed to me by the light wherewith God hath enlightened me, muſt I deny the light wherewith God hath enlightened me, and ſubject to the church's light? Or muſt I practiſe as the church orders, before I have light and faith in my own particular?*

Anſw. I ſhall anſwer this queſtion according to the naked and plain ſenſe of truth in my heart.

Firſt, God gives power to his church to perform all that he requires of her as a church. Now the church is a ſpiritual body, and is to take care of her members, to look after them that they mind the truth, and walk according to truth, and to admoniſh and reprove them when they do otherwiſe. And every member of the church ought to hear the church, in whatever ſhe ſpeaks unto it from God.

Secondly, Every member hath need of the light, Spirit, and power which God gives his church, and reveals in his church, for the good of the body, and the benefit and advantage of each member therein.

Thirdly, The light, Spirit and power in the church is never contrary to the light, Spirit, and power in any member; but always one with it, and a cheriſher and preſerver of what God begets, and which anſwers his witneſs in any. The new Jeruſalem, the church of God's building in his own Spirit and power, is a city at unity with itſelf. The greateſt degree of light owns, and is at unity with, the leaſt; and the leaſt degree of light hath a ſenſe of that which is in degree and meaſure above it.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The light in the weakeſt, which they are at firſt to be turned, and afterwards to be kept to, though there is a ſufficiency in it for the particular, yet they are not ſo underſtanding and ſenſible of it as thoſe whoſe ſenſes have been long exerciſed in the living truth, and are grown in the holy experience. Therefore as the elders are to be tender of the younger, ſo the younger are to reverence the elders in the Lord, and not to ſlight their teſtimony, experience, or judgment in the truth. When we were firſt convinced of the truth, were we not in a great degree ignorant and doubtful concerning the riſings and motions of it in the heart, which the eye being yet weak, could not clearly diſtinguiſh? And oh! how helpful to us was the tender care and advice of ſuch whom God had made acquainted with thoſe things, and were able to give us true judgment from him, in ſuch caſes as our weak minds were apt to be entangled about, and could not ſee through?

Fifthly, Great ſobriety is needful in ſuch caſes, wherein men are too prone to be judging others, eſpecially the church of God. Every man is to take heed of thinking of himſelf more highly than he ought to think; but to think ſoberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith, Rom. xii. 3. And the young men (who have not the experience of the aged, and are moſt apt to confidence and excurſions) are in a ſpecial manner to be exhorted to be ſober-minded, Tit. ii. 6. Men may eaſily judge that others err, and that they themſelves keep to the light and meaſure of truth in their own particulars; but it is hard to do it. But they that indeed do it, abide in the humility, and innocency, and lamb-like ſpirit, which would give no offence in any thing, neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the church of God. If it will go ſo hard with him that offends one of Chriſt's little-ones, how will it go with him that offends his church, wherein his power and glory riſeth, and is eſtabliſhed? The church is not apt to be ſuch an erring body from the light, Spirit, and power of the Lord Jeſus, as many (who miſtake concerning

cerning the light in their own particulars) are too apt to ſuppoſe.

Laſtly, Ever ſince the fall of man, man hath been ſecretly, or more manifeſtly, directed by a light, or the principle within, to direct or guide his ways. To Adam the holy ſeed was promiſed, which was not only to appear outwardly in a body of fleſh, but alſo within in man's heart, to bruiſe the ſerpent's head there. And the holy patriarchs had not the letter outwardly, but God's Spirit inwardly to be their guide and teacher, which did alſo ſtrive with the wicked old world before the flood. The Jews alſo were directed to the word nigh in the mouth and heart: and this word ſhewed alſo to the Gentiles what was good, and what the Lord required of them; and by this Word ſuch of the Gentiles as hearkened to it felt ſomewhat of the new creation, and of the new nature, by which nature they did in meaſure anſwer the holy law of God, and do the things contained in the law, which by the old corrupt nature no man can do. Alſo Chriſt preached the kingdom, or ſeed of the kingdom within. And the apoſtles preached the ſame word of faith within, which Moſes had teſtified of.

Yet in none of theſe diſpenſations was any teſtimony from God to be deſpiſed; but his voice to be heard in the prophets, in Chriſt, and in the apoſtles. And though men are bleſſedly and gloriouſly turned, and to be turned to the light within, in theſe our days; yet they are not thereby taught to neglect or deſpiſe the voice of God, in any whom he ſends and ſpeaks by, and pretend it is contrary to their light; but to lie low before the Lord, that in the true humility and holy fear, they may know the voice of the Shepherd, both in their own hearts, and in whomſoever he pleaſeth to ſpeak. For the Great Almighty God is not limited, but he may ſpeak in and through whom he pleaſeth. He may ſpeak to me from the anointing in my own heart, and the holy anointing may pleaſe to ſpeak to me through others; and ſo far as I am of God, and ſenſible of his appearance, I cannot deſpiſe the voice of the anointing in my own

own heart, or through others. Yea, truth teacheth that modeſty, temperance, humility, tenderneſs, and ſobriety, that I dare not deſpiſe the voice that pretends to the anointing in any, until I have made trial of it. Yea, John Pennyman's voice and teſtimony I durſt not condemn, until the Lord my God, in the unerring light and pure ſpringing life, manifeſted unto me that it is not of him, but of the transforming enemy, who had bewitched and deceived him by his ſtrong deluſions (he forſaking the rock, which would have been his ſtrength), to receive and believe a lie, inſtead of the truth.

Oh! bleſſed be the Lord for the building up ſuch a church, and ſpeaking to us through his church! And happy are they that hear her voice, and ſo keep to their own, as to know the voice of their own in the church, and are not through temptation prejudiced againſt it. For it is the Lord's gathering, and the Lord is with it; and the people who have been gathered by the Lord, and are daily taught by him, keep with him. And though ſome may depart from us, and through error of judgment teſtify againſt us, yet truth abides, and the Lord's people abide with the truth, and his building goeth on, and the holy government of his Son encreaſeth in it, and the Lord appears more and more inwardly in his glory, as the hearts of his people are made capable to receive it from him. And in all the goings out of any, and apoſtaſies that have been in any, through hearkening to a wrong ſpirit, they that have heard and reverenced the voice and teſtimony of the church, and God's choſen and bleſſed miniſtry, which he hath raiſed among us, have ſtill been preſerved; and they that have gone therefrom, been betrayed. And it is my faith, this church of God's gathering ſhall ſtill be preſerved, and grow in the holy dominion and authority of God's bleſſed Spirit; and that all her enemies ſhall be found liars unto her, and ſhe ſhall tread upon their high places, and ſhall grow and proſper the more by all oppoſition; the everlaſting arm and wiſdom of the Almighty being with her, to preſerve, proſper, and bleſs her, ſo be it. Amen.

THE

THE

SEED of GOD,

AND OF HIS

KINGDOM,

Treated and Teſtified of

According to the SCRIPTURES of TRUTH,

AND ACCORDING TO

True Experience felt in the HEART from the

GOD of TRUTH.

By ISAAC PENINGTON.

" The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of muſtard-
" ſeed, which a man took and ſowed in his field.
" Which indeed is the leaſt of all ſeeds: but when it
" is grown, it is the greateſt among herbs, &c."
Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

" Being born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but in-
" corruptible, by the word of God which liveth and
" abideth for ever." 1 Pet. i. 23.

" Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin;
" for his ſeed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin,
" becauſe he is born of God." 1 John iii. 9.

THE

PREFACE.

I WOULD fain have (and my ſoul exceedingly breathes to the Lord for it) diſputing about religion come to an end, and the right underſtanding, practiſing, and experiencing the true religion begun and go on in mens hearts. The goſpel-religion, in the apoſtles days, did begin in the evidence and demonſtration of God's Spirit inwardly; and it cannot rightly begin any otherwiſe now. Nor can it rightly go on any other way, but according to its beginning: for they that begin in the Spirit, cannot poſſibly rightly go on, or be made perfect, by the fleſh. Did the apoſtles in vain wait for the Spirit and power from on high? Can the Goſpel-miniſtry, or goſpel-work in any heart, be carried on without it? Or did they in vain turn men from Satan's power to God? Can the leaſt true change be wrought in the heart, without the operation of God's Holy Spirit and power there? And to be turned to wait for, and taught to know, the riſings of the pure power of the Lord inwardly (which is ſo neceſſary to begin, preſerve, and carry on the work), oh! what a precious miniſtration of life, and of the goſpel, is this from the Lord? The thing that we wanted, and mourned after all our days, in our ſeveral ſtrains and ways of profeſſion, without the knowledge of this, is now met with; bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who hath caſt up and prepared the way (according to his promiſe) before the face of all people. Whoever hath an ear to hear what the Spirit ſaith to the churches of his own gathering, or from the angel of his own ſend-

ing, may now hear the bleſſed tidings of the reign of the King of Iſrael, and of Sion his holy hill, and Jeruſalem his holy city; and how to wait for the law going out of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem, and how he may receive the ſheep's nature, and the ſheep's ear, which hears the voice of the Shepherd, and is not deceived about it. Oh! come out of the vain diſputing mind, and thou comeſt out of deceit! Come into the true ſilence and ſtilling of the fleſhly part thither, where God's voice is heard and underſtood; and thou comeſt into true certainty. There thou comeſt to hear the voice behind thee, calling thee from every falſe way (which is polluted, and where thy ſoul's reſt is not) and directing thee to the true way, to the way of holineſs, livingly pointing out and ſaying to thee, "This is the way, walk in it." This is the way of life, this is the way of truth, this is the way of peace, this is the way of holineſs; here all the true travellers are to walk, with their faces Sion-wards, to obtain the kingdom and righteouſneſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Now, Oh! every one that truly thirſts, why do ye not come to the waters? God hath opened the way, he heartily invites you; yea, "the Spirit and the bride "ſay come, and take the waters of life freely." Oh! wait to know the inward holy power, and the inward birth, and the inward teaching, and the inward covenant, and this birth's overcoming, by the inward power, the inward enemies; that ye being delivered from them, may come to enjoy the well of life, and to ſit down in the heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus, where the true reſt is; and in the ſtrength, life, and virtue of his Spirit, may ſerve the Lord in righteouſneſs and holineſs, without fear of thoſe enemies which the Lord hath delivered you from, and which his love, mercy, and power, is as a wing over you to preſerve you for ever from; I ſay, that ye may ſerve the Lord your God out of the fear of theſe, and feed on his holy mountain, out of the reach of thoſe, in the majeſty of the name of the Lord our God, and theſe may not be able to make you afraid,

afraid, or diſturb your reſt, or hinder your ſweet enjoyment and precious ſervice of your God any more! Oh! ye that are afraid of being deceived, take heed that ye be not deceived inwardly in your hearts, about theſe things; and by the veil which the enemy ſpreads there, hindered and deprived of your ſhare in the bleſſed adminiſtration of the Spirit, life, and power of our Lord Jeſus; whom to know after the fleſh (or as man can comprehend concerning him in his carnal mind) is of little value; but to know him inwardly and ſpiritually, to live and reign, and to exerciſe his dominion in the heart over every temptation, and over all that is contrary to God (whenever any ſuch thing appears) is a pure, living, excellent, and ſatisfactory knowledge of him; which the Lord lead every truly-hungering and thirſting ſoul towards the obtaining and full enjoyment of! Amen.

CONCERNING THE

SEED of GOD,

OR THE

SEED of the KINGDOM:

What it is: Where it is to be found: Who ſowed it there: What is hid or wrapped up in it: What is its Nature: What its Effects: Of its Growth, and Hindrances thereof: Of its Bleſſedneſs, and how it makes Bleſſed? How CHRIST is formed of this Seed; and how the Soul is born of this Immortal Seed.

Firſt, *WHAT the ſeed is?*

Anſw. The ſeed of God is the word of God; the ſeed of the kingdom is the word of the kingdom. It is a meaſure of the light and life, of the grace and truth, which is by Jeſus Chriſt, whereof in him is the fulneſs. It is an heavenly talent, or manifeſtation of his Spirit in the heart, which is given to man for him, in the virtue and ſtrength of Chriſt, to improve for God. This which God hath placed in man, to witneſs for himſelf, and to guide man from evil unto good (in the pure breathings, quickenings, and ſhinings of it) this is the ſeed, which is freely beſtowed on man, to ſpring up and remain in him, and to gather him out of himſelf, into itſelf.

Secondly

Secondly, *Who is the ſower of this ſeed?*

Anſw. God, in and through Chriſt. He is the good huſbandman. He, by the word which created all in the beginning, creates anew in Chriſt Jeſus, renews his workmanſhip in man, and puts a meaſure of this word or Spirit of life in man's heart, whereby he renews him; and they that are thus renewed by him, are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works.

Thirdly, *Where is this ſeed to be found?*

Anſw. Where God ſows it, which is in the inward earth. It is an inward ſeed, and it is ſowed in inward land or earth; that is, in the hearts of men. There the light of the word ſhines, there the life of the word is felt, ſtirring ſecretly in and quickening thoſe that were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. There the voice and call of the word is heard, calling from unrighteouſneſs and ſin, to righteouſneſs and holineſs.

Fourthly, *In what ſorts of earth is this heavenly ſeed ſown?*

Anſw. In all ſorts; in thorny ground, ſtony ground, highway ground, and good ground. God's inward lightenings enlighten the inward world throughout; ſo that God hath not left any man without a witneſs in his conſcience againſt ſin. So that, though man's conſcience be corrupt, and his light become darkneſs, yet God's witneſs in his conſcience can never be corrupted; but whenever it witneſſeth there, it witneſſeth the truth for God, and againſt man, and the corruption and ſearedneſs of his heart and conſcience.

Fifthly, *In what ſort of earth it brings forth good fruit to perfection.*

Anſw. Only in the good ground. It brings forth fruit in other grounds, and the fruit it brings forth is good. The convictions are good, the deſires begotten there by it, and that ariſe from it, are good. The leaving off of ſome bad things, and doing ſome good things, is good; but the thorns, the cares, the worldlineſs, the fear of perſecution, that ſpring up from another root, and are of another nature, choke

the good which the ſeed brings forth in the thorny ground, and ſtifle and choke the ſeed itſelf alſo, in ſuch kind of grounds. But in the good ground which yields its whole nouriſhment to the good ſeed, and will not yield nouriſhment to any bad; the good ſeed not only ſprings up, but brings forth fruit to perfection.

Sixthly, *How may the ground that is bad be made good? Was not the ground which is now good, once bad; and may not the ground which is now bad, be made good?*

Anſw. God hath ſhut up all men in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. The heart that is now ſoft, was once hard. The heart that is now believing, was once in the unbelief. The heart that now loves God, was once in the enmity. The plough of God, put into the thorny ground, tearing it up, and rooting out the thorns thereof, will change its nature, and make it become better.

"Break up your fallow ground: ſow not among "thorns;" ſaid God to his Iſrael of old. And the ſtony ground, if the ſtones be picked out of it, will be leſs ſtony; yea, not at all ſtony, if all the ſtones be picked out. And the highway ground, being incloſed, and dreſſed by God's Spirit and power, will be no longer common or highway ground. Doth not man, by care, art, and induſtry, change the nature of outward land or ground? Surely then the Lord, by the word of his power, by his inward deſtroying of evil, and creating good anew, can change the nature of ground inwardly.

Now for the clearer and plainer ſignifying of what yet remains on my heart, concerning this precious ſeed of life, or ſeed of the kingdom of God; I ſhall diſtribute it under theſe three heads; under which the things mentioned in the foregoing title will he comprized.

I. What is hid or wrapped up in this ſeed.
II. The nature of it.
III. The effects of it.

I. *What*

I.

What is hid or wrapped up in this precious heavenly Seed.

Answ. INDEED there is so much wrapped up in it, as the heart of man cannot conceive, much less the tongue utter; yet somewhat have I felt, and somewhat is upon my heart, to say in answer to this thing, under these four heads following.

First, The glory of the kingdom of heaven, the glory of the everlasting kingdom, is hid and wrapped up in it as in a seed. Whatever Christ appears, reigns, and shines in, is there as in a seed. Oh! the shootings forth, and spreadings abroad of it, are indeed glorious and excellent! How can a man almost speak concerning it! the thing itself (being inwardly felt, known, and enjoyed) is so far beyond all words! What doth the kingdom of God stand in? It stands not in word, but in power. The power is hid and wrapped up in this seed. The pure power of life is in this seed. The sword that pierceth Leviathan, that woundeth the Serpent's head, that cutteth Rahab and the Dragon, is in this seed. Doth the kingdom of God consist in righteousness, peace, and joy in God's Spirit? This is all in this seed, and is partaken of and enjoyed, as this seed springs up, and gains authority and dominion in the heart. Yea, the horn of God's anointed, the righteous and peaceable sceptre of the Saviour, is known and exalted in this seed, as it springs up, and spreads abroad in the life and virtue of the Father.

Secondly, The divine nature of God Almighty is hid and wrapped up in it. It is the seed of God, and it is of the very nature of God; and he in whom it springs, and who is gathered into it, born of it, and one with it, partakes of the divine nature. Peter speaks of the great and precious promises, whereby the saints are made partakers of the divine nature. All the promises are to the seed of promise, to Christ the Son of God, to the seed of God, to the heirs of life and salvation in Christ; and

and they are all fulfilled to them, and enjoyed by them, who are ingrafted into, and one with Chriſt the ſeed; which cannnot be, but by the grace, by the truth, by the light, life, Spirit, and power, which he ſows in the heart; which are not many things, but all contained and comprehended in the one ſeed.

Thirdly, All the graces and virtues of God's Holy Spirit are hid and wrapped up in this one ſeed. There is nothing God can require of the ſoul, nor nothing the ſoul can deſire of God, but is hid and wrapped up in this ſeed. So that all that is needful, or all that can be deſired, is the growing and ſpreading of this ſeed in the ſoul, and the ſoul's gathering into it, and its living, dwelling, abiding, and acting in it. And oh! the great difference between the ſoul's ſelfiſh ſtriving and willing, and running, to join to God and Chriſt, and to live in God and Chriſt; and God's joining it to himſelf and his Son in this ſeed, and its living, willing, and acting, in the ſpringing life of this ſeed! To make this a little more plain and evident to the hearts of thoſe that deſire the true underſtanding of this thing, I ſhall inſtance in ſome particulars.

Firſt, The pure, living, heavenly knowledge of the Father, and of his Son Chriſt Jeſus, is wrapped up in this ſeed. God is light; and this ſeed, which comes from him, is not darkneſs, but light; and in the ſpringing light of this ſeed, God and Chriſt are revealed. The divine nature of them ſprings up in the ſeed (and if I know their nature, I know them); yea, here we (whom the Lord hath viſited, and ſhewn mercy to, though men deſpiſe us) know the righteous Spirit of Chriſt, the righteous nature of Chriſt, the righteous life of Chriſt, and feel him to be one with the Father, who begets of the ſame Spirit, nature, and life in us. And he that is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, and he that is united to the Lord is one Spirit; and he that is united to the ſeed, to the meaſure of grace and truth from Chriſt (wherein and whereby the ſoul is united), is united to God, and ingrafted into Chriſt; and as the ſeed is formed in him, Chriſt is formed in him; and

and as he is formed and new-created in the ſeed, he is the workmanſhip of God, formed and new-created in Chriſt.

Secondly, Faith, the true faith, the lively, effectual, ſaving, conquering faith, which gives victory over the world, and over the devil and his temptations, is contained or wrapped up in this ſeed. Faith is the gift of God, the precious gift of God; which is not found in man's nature, but ſprings and grows from the precious ſeed of the kingdom, which God ſows in man's heart. So that it is a gift to be waited for, and obtained from God. Therefore the apoſtle Peter, writing to the ſaints in his time, directs his epiſtle thus, "To them "who have obtained the like precious faith with us, "through the righteouſneſs of God, and our Saviour "Jeſus Chriſt," 2 Pet. i. 1. Faith is a precious thing, a righteous thing, an holy thing, which God is the giver of, which Chriſt is the author and finiſher of; and it ſprings from the holy root, from the holy ſeed of life and righteouſneſs, which God ſows in the heart. This faith (I ſpeak not of man's ability of believing, or the faith which is found in man's nature) is the faith of God's elect, Tit. i. 1. The faith which God gives to them that are born of him, John i. 12, 13. who are born of the ſeed incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever, 1 Peter i. 23. which word being nigh in the mouth and heart, and begetting, preſerving, and increaſing faith there (as is daily experienced plentifully, bleſſed be the Lord), is therefore called the word of faith, Rom. x. 8.

Thirdly, The pure fear, the holy fear, the heavenly fear, which is of a clean and heavenly nature, and endureth for ever, is alſo in this ſeed. The child-like fear is in the nature of the child; and the more it grows in the true child-like nature, the more it grows in this kindly fear, wherein there is no torment, but the pure pleaſure of life, and of holy obedience to the Father of life. The child-like fear is a promiſe of the new covenant; and given to the children of the new covenant, by virtue of the new covenant; God putting

putting it into their hearts from the ſeed of life ſpringing up in them, which preſerves them from departing from the Lord, Jer. xxxii. 40.

Fourthly, The pure divine love is in it. As this ſprings, love to God ſprings. As God is love, ſo the ſeed that is of him partakes of love. There is no enmity in it, nor no enmity or ill-will ſprings from it. This is it that makes it ſo natural to the children of God to love; becauſe they are born of that ſeed which came from the God of love, whoſe nature is love. Oh! how daily is it found, by ſweet and certain experience, that this ſeed (ſpringing up) teacheth and enableth to love! And they that have this ſeed ſpringing up in them, need not to be writ to, or outwardly taught to love with the brotherly love; for in it, and by it, and through it, they are taught of God to love one another. So that there needs nothing but the circumciſing of the heart, the purifying of the heart, through the obedience of the truth, the cutting off of that fleſhly mind, nature, will, and wiſdom, which cannot love aright; and the pure love will ſpring up fully towards the Lord, and towards the brethren, Deut. xxx. 6. 1 Peter i. 22. yea, it will be natural to love all; and that command of Chriſt will not be grievous; namely, to love enemies, even the greateſt revilers, curſers, and perſecuters, Matt. v. 44.

Fifthly, The pure hope, the hope of the upright, the hope which makes not aſhamed, the hope which goes within the veil, and is a ſure and ſtedfaſt anchor there, ſtaying the mind upon the Lord, who keeps ſuch in perfect peace; this hope is contained in, and ſpringing from, the ſeed. For nothing but that which comes from God (from the holy ſeed of truth and righteouſneſs), can ſtay the mind upon God. So that he that feels the ſeed, feels the hope; and keeping to the ſeed (to the holy root) to the end, the hope remains to the end. So the mind being turned to the light, being turned from Satan's power to God, being turned to Chriſt, being turned to the appearance and voice of the word of life within, being turned from the

the ſeed of wickedneſs and darkneſs, to the holy and righteous ſeed of the kingdom, it is turned to the hope, it is turned to that which begets a true and right hope in the heart; which hopes in God's love, hopes in God's mercy, hopes in God's kind, tender, and faithful nature; and hath no confidence nor hope in the fleſh, but in the holy and heavenly ſeed, and work of righteouſneſs and of the kingdom; which is God's battle-axe and weapon of war, whereby he brings down the fleſh. This hope ſtays the mind in every temptation, in every diſtreſs, in every trial, in all the winds, ſtorms, and waves of perſecution that it can be aſſaulted with. For in this ſeed the root of Jeſſe is felt, the everlaſting rock and foundation of life is felt; and here the hope of God fills his, that are gathered hither, and abide here, with all joy and peace in believing, that they may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghoſt, Rom. xv. 12, 13.

Sixthly, The true patience, which obtains the crown, which makes perfect and entire; ſo that there is nothing wanting, where it hath its perfect work (Jam. i. 4.); the patience which enables quietly to ſuffer any chaſtiſement from God, or any affliction, or hard dealing from men, it is contained in, and given with, this ſeed. As God is patient, and long-ſuffering, ſo this ſeed is alſo. It is man that is of the brittle, fretful, impatient nature; but he that receiveth the word of faith, the ſeed of faith, in it he receiveth faith and patience alſo: ſo that to him it is not only given to believe, but to ſuffer alſo for the ſake of Chriſt; and he that abides in the ſeed, and feels the ſeed remaining in him, and its nature prevailing, can never be impatient, whatſoever the Lord ſuffers to befall him.

Seventhly, The Lamb's meekneſs is in it. Where ſhould the Lamb's meekneſs be found, but in his Father's ſeed, or in the ſeed of his Father's kingdom? Here the meek and quiet Spirit is received, witneſſed, and enjoyed, which in the ſight of God is of much price. This ſeed is ſowed or begotten in the womb of the heavenly wiſdom; and the meekneſs of wiſdom, the true

true meekneſs of the true wiſdom, is found in it. Here the ſtill, ſoft, gentle, lamb-like nature grows up, wherein there is none of Eſau's roughneſs.

Eighthly, Here poverty of Spirit, true poverty of Spirit, is witneſſed. He is poor indeed, who hath ſold all, and hath nothing left him but this ſeed, and the appearance and help of God in this ſeed; which is not in his own hands neither, but in the will and diſpoſal of God.

Ninthly, Here mercifulneſs towards others is experienced: for he that is brought hither lives only by mercy; and he that lives by mercy, and is daily what he is by mercy, cannot but be merciful unto others.

Tenthly, Here the true mourning and lamenting after the Lord, and his precious life and preſence, and becauſe of the preſence or power of that which hinders the growth of the ſeed, and the ſoul's union with, and enjoyment of, the Lord in it, is witneſſed. For the true mourning, to which the bleſſedneſs belongs, is of God, from the living ſenſe that ariſeth from his pure ſeed in the heart; and bleſſed indeed are they that thus mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.

Eleventhly, The true hungering and thirſting after righteouſneſs ariſeth from this ſeed. It is the ſeed of God, the birth of God, that which hath the ſenſe of the excellency of his righteouſneſs, that hungers and thirſts after his righteouſneſs.

Twelfthly, The true ſobriety, moderation, and temperance ariſeth from this ſeed; and they that are joined to the ſeed, and are and act in the ſeed, eaſily learn ſuch ſobriety, moderation, and temperance, as they that are out of it cannot poſſibly learn.

Laſtly, To name no more, the croſs which mortifies and crucifies to the world and to ſin, can only be taken up in the ſeed, or by virtue of the ſeed. Indeed the ſeed is a croſs; yea, enmity to the ſerpent's nature, ſpirit, and courſe; and he that takes it up, its will, its nature, its law of life, takes up the croſs to the other nature, will, and the law of ſin and death. So that fly the holy ſeed, and thou haſt only a ſhadow or appearance

pearance of the croſs; but in a ſenſe of, and ſubjection to the ſeed, the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is felt, working powerfully againſt ſin, and the whole courſe of the evil and ſinful nature, effectually crucifying and ſubduing it.

Fourthly, The fourth thing which is hid or wrapped up in the precious ſeed, which is the laſt that remains to be mentioned by me at this time, is this; The new covenant, which God makes with the new Iſrael, by which he makes the heart new, and writes his law in it, and takes away the ſtony heart, and heals all their backſlidings, and loves them freely, and puts his Spirit within them, cauſing them to walk in his ways, and to keep his ſtatutes and judgments, and do them; even the holy agreement of the ſoul with God in Chriſt Jeſus, is in this ſeed.

God gave Chriſt for a covenant, and the ſeed of grace and truth comes by Jeſus Chriſt; which is of his nature, of him the covenant; and all that receive this grace and truth from him, this holy ſeed of the kingdom, they receive the covenant; and they that walk in it, walk in the covenant.

Here, and here alone, the new creation in Chriſt Jeſus is known.

Here, and here alone, the coming to God by Chriſt is truly underſtood and witneſſed.

Here, and here alone, the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus is writ in the heart.

Keep here, thou never goeſt out of the holy agreement with God and with Chriſt; for in this grace and truth, in this ſeed of life, there is nothing that diſagrees with them. Here thou liveſt in the Spirit, walkeſt in the Spirit, and doſt not, canſt not, fulfill the luſts of the fleſh. There is nothing here that will either diſpleaſe God, or lead thy ſoul aſide from him; but here the Lord guides the feet of his ſaints, and teacheth all of them (from the leaſt babe of them, to the higheſt growth), and puts his law of life and new obedience, and his holy Spirit, into their hearts, that none of their ſteps may ſlide. Here the way of holineſs, wherein

wherein God preſerves his from erring, Iſa. xxxv. 8. is known and walked in. Yea, here Chriſt is known and felt to be the way, the truth, and the life. The ſheep that are gathered hither, and come hither, are returned to the Biſhop and Shepherd of their ſouls, who watcheth over them, and powerfully preſerveth them, that they run aſtray no more. For whither ſhould they go, or whom ſhould they hear, when they have found him, and know his voice, with whom are the words of eternal life?

I ſhall conclude this head with that precious ſcripture, 1 Cor. i. 30. "But of him are ye in Chriſt "Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and "righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption." How are we of God in Chriſt Jeſus, but by this ſeed of God, by being born of the Spirit of God, by being begotten out of the ſpirit of the world, into the nature and Spirit of Chriſt, from this immortal and incorruptible ſeed of life, truth, grace, and Spirit? And how do we put on Chriſt, but by putting on this ſeed? And how do we grow up in Chriſt, but by the growing up in this ſeed, and feeling this ſeed grow up in us? And here, in truth and demonſtration of God's Spirit, we are formed in Chriſt, and Chriſt formed in us, as this ſeed groweth up into a form and ſhape in us, and we into a form and ſhape in it. Now we cannot receive this ſeed, but as we part with and deny our own wiſdom and fleſhly confidence; and denying that, and crying to God for wiſdom, God brings up the wiſdom of the ſeed in us, and makes Chriſt become unto us wiſdom therein. And we cannot hunger after the true righteouſneſs, the heavenly righteouſneſs, the righteouſneſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but as we ſee the loathſomeneſs of, and put off, our own righteouſneſs; and then becoming naked, we are taught of God to buy white raiment of him, which is the righteouſneſs of the ſaints, and ſo he becomes our righteouſneſs, made ſo of God to us.

And he is the purger and cleanſer of ſin and unholineſs out of our hearts and lives, and the holy leavener

leavener and ſanctifier of our hearts; ſo that we have nothing of holineſs, but what we have of him and in him. And he is our redemption; our redemption is by him and through him, our redemption is wrought and preſerved by him, and enjoyed in him; yea, he is made of God unto us redemption. So that having him, we have redemption through his blood; yea, he is our redeemer and redemption for evermore. Alas! what is it to get notions of theſe things into the outward comprehenſion! but to feel them livingly in the heart, is life and peace for evermore; and the knowledge of this ſeed of the kingdom, and of God and Chriſt in this ſeed, is the moſt precious knowledge that can be deſired, obtained, or enjoyed.

II.

The Nature of this Seed.

WHAT is the nature of the ſeed of God, or the ſeed of the kingdom?

Anſ. Though the nature of it hath been largely ſignified already, under the foregoing head, (for the mentioning of what is wrapped up in it, abundantly ſheweth its nature) yet I ſhall ſpeak a little more punctually and expreſsly of it in ſeveral particulars, according to the ſcriptures, that the reader may have the more diſtinct ſenſe and inward apprehenſion of it, the Lord opening his heart in reading theſe things.

Firſt, It is of an immortal, incorruptible nature, 1 Pet. i. 23. It is a ſeed that can never die in itſelf, though it may be as it were dead in man, or unto man, not putting forth any of its hidden life or virtue in the man that hath ſlain it as to himſelf; who having ſlain that whereby God gives life, is dead in treſpaſſes and in ſins, and cannot live any more, till God breathe upon and quicken this ſeed in him, and him by this ſeed. This is a great myſtery. Doubtleſs the ſeed of life and godlineſs, wherein the life and

godlineſs of the ſoul lies hid, muſt needs be a great myſtery, and cannot be known but as God reveals it.

Secondly, It is of a gathering nature. It is of the nature of a net, Mat. xiii. 47. It gathers out of that which is contrary to God, unto God. It gathers out of the world, out of the ſea of wickedneſs, out of the kingdom of darkneſs, out of a man's own nature and ſpirit, into God's nature and Spirit, and his light and kingdom, wherein the ſoul ſhould dwell, and walk, and be ſubject, with God.

Thirdly, It is of a purging, cleanſing nature. It is of the nature of fire, of the nature of water, inwardly and ſpiritually. This ſeed is Spirit and life in a meaſure; and by it, or by God's Spirit which dwells and is revealed in it, he waſheth and purgeth away the filth of the daughter of Sion, and the blood of Jeruſalem from the midſt thereof. There is ſtrength in this ſeed, and virtue in this ſeed, againſt all the ſtrength of deceit and wickedneſs in the other ſeed; and as it ſprings up, and is received and joined to in the holy fear of the Lord, it prevails over it, and caſteth away its darkneſs, and purgeth away and burneth up its filth, chaff, and corruption.

Fourthly, It is of a ſeaſoning, leavening, ſanctifying nature. It is like ſalt, it is like leaven. It ſeaſons and leavens with life. It ſeaſons and leavens with righteouſneſs. It ſeaſons and leavens with the image of God. So ſoon as ever it ſprings in the heart, it begins to leaven it; and if it be not ſnibbed, or grieved, or hurt, or quenched, (for it is of a moſt ſenſible tender nature) it will go on leavening more and more with the nature of truth, into the likeneſs of the God of truth. Mark ix. 50. Luke xiii. 21. Col. iv. 6.

Fifthly, It is of an enriching nature. It is a hidden treaſure or pearl of great price. It makes the wiſe merchant very rich, who ſells all for it, and buys the field and it. He that buys the truth, and will by no means ſell or part with it, but gives up to it, and makes it his treaſure, oh! how doth it enrich his heart with

with that which is holy and heavenly! How rich doth it make him towards God! Mat. xiii. 44. 46.

Sixthly, It is of an improving, growing nature, of a nature that will grow and may be improved. The one talent may be increaſed into more. The little ſeed, like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, will grow in the good ground beyond all herbs, and become a tree, a tree of righteouſneſs of the Lord's planting, that he may be glorified, Mat. xiii. 31, 32. chap. xxv. 16. chap. viii. 23.

III.

Of the Effects.

WHAT are the effects of this ſeed?

Anſ. The effects of the pure ſeed in the heart are very many, very great, very ſweet, precious and bleſſed, which every one comes to experience, that experienceth the growth and ſpreading of it. I ſhall inſtance only in ſome few, to give a taſte thereof.

The firſt I ſhall mention is, union and communion with God the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Father of this ſeed, and of all that are united to it. Union and communion with God is ſtill in this ſeed, and never out of it. For as in the ſeed of the ſerpent a man is ſeparated from God, alienated from his life, and can never come near him, nor have fellowſhip with him; ſo in the holy ſeed, in the ſeed of life, and in the ſeed of righteouſneſs, in the ſeed of faith, the ſoul is united to God, hath acceſs to him, the living fountain, and hath fellowſhip with him in that which is living and holy of him. Men may imagine an union and communion with God out of this, but none can truly unite to God, or have fellowſhip with him, but in the gift, in the grace, in the light, in the Spirit which is of God.

Secondly, This ſeed felt ſpringing in the heart, and joined to, brings down and keeps down all that is contrary to God. This honour and power God hath given to the ſeed of the woman, (even to the leaſt meaſure of it) that it ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and free the ſoul from captivity and ſlavery to the wicked one. So that the ſoul, in the living ſenſe, authority, and virtue of this, may refuſe yielding its members, its faculties, its will, its mind, its underſtanding, its affections to ſin and unrighteouſneſs. Yea, the devil, the great red dragon, the god of the world, the mighty ſpirit and power of darkneſs, being reſiſted in this, is ſtill overcome. When any reſiſt the devil in their own ſtrength, (in the ſtrength of their own deſires, abilities, and reſolutions) he ſtill overcomes them; but they that reſiſt the devil in the faith that ſprings from this ſeed, ſtill overcome him. So that ſin is brought down, and temptations kept out of, by the virtue and power of the life and authority of the Saviour, that ſprings up in this ſeed of God, which the ſoul that is joined to (leavened with, and tranſplanted into) partakes of.

Thirdly, As it ſprings, and its operations are felt and received, it brings into the image and nature of God. It blots out the devil's image in the mind, and makes like God and like Chriſt. Yea, here we have the very mind of Chriſt, and are one with the mind of Chriſt. As in the ſerpent's ſeed, the ſerpent's image and nature is put on; ſo in this ſeed, the image of God and Chriſt is put on. Yea, the ſerpent, the dark ſpirit, the wicked ſpirit, the deceitful ſpirit, is here put off, and Chriſt is put on; and whoever would know the real putting off of the old man, and the putting on of the new man, which is created in the righteouſneſs and holineſs of truth, muſt know it in this ſeed. Here the truth is known as it is in Jeſus, in its effectual power and virtue, putting off the old image and nature, and putting on the new, even the heavenly divine image and nature.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, It brings the mind, the heart, the ſoul, the ſpirit, into the new obedience, (into its own obedient nature) even to do the will of God with great delight and pleaſure. I delight to do thy will, ſaid Chriſt. This ſeed is of his nature. It is a meaſure, a proportion, an heavenly talent of his grace and truth; a gift of light and life from him, the fulneſs, given to make willing (like him) to do the Father's will, and it really doth ſo, inſomuch as the ſoul, that is thoroughly leavened and one with it, can alſo ſay, I likewiſe delight to do thy will, O God! it is become my meat and drink; for I am nouriſhed, refreſhed, and delighted with the virtue that I feel ſpring in me, in doing thy will. Indeed it is not ſo at firſt, while there is a nature, a will, a wiſdom contrary to the nature, will, and wiſdom of God; obedience is then hard, the croſs is then a ſore yoke upon my neck. But that nature being ſubdued, and the nature of the ſeed coming up and prevailing, what can be more delightful to this new nature, than to do the will of its heavenly Father, and to find the heart of the Father pleaſed with the child, which it always is, while the child is in tenderneſs of ſpirit, in the holy faith, and in the holy obedience to him!

Fifthly, It brings into the underſtanding, ſenſe, and enjoyment of all the precious promiſes, and to the partaking of all the ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. All the promiſes are to the ſeed, and Yea and Amen in Chriſt; and the leaſt meaſure of his life hath a ſhare therein. The ſeed, the everlaſting ſeed is the heir; and we joined to the ſeed, born of the ſeed, growing up in the ſeed, are joint-heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt. So that every promiſe comes to be underſtood here, taſted of here, enjoyed here. How full are the ſcriptures of ſweet and precious promiſes! Alas! what is it for men to apply them to themſelves, when they have no right to them, nor indeed rightly underſtand them, nor were they intended by the Lord to their preſent ſtates and conditions. But to come to the true underſtanding

of the promiſes, to be led by the Lord into that condition, and preſerved by him in that condition, to which the promiſes belong, and to have him bring home the promiſes to the heart, and drop in the ſweet, healing, delighting, refreſhing virtue of them; oh! how ſweet, comforting, and gladding is this! Indeed in this ſeed all the curſes of the book paſs away, and all the bleſſings flow in, and multiply on the ſoul day by day. So that this may well be called the bleſſed ſeed; for in it the ſoul is bleſſed, and filled with bleſſings by him who is able to multiply them upon the ſoul, and to guide the ſoul in the ſafe and right uſe and enjoyment of them.

But what need I mention any more? Here is light, here is life, here is righteouſneſs, here is peace, here is heavenly joy, here is the holy power, ſpringing and bringing forth their fruits, and precious operations and effects in the heart; and here is aſſurance of the love of God in Chriſt for ever, and that God will never leave nor forſake that ſoul which is joined to him, and abides with him in this ſeed; but it ſhall be kept by the power of God, through the faith that ſprings from this ſeed, unto perfect redemption and ſalvation. Amen.

SOME

SOME QUERIES CONCERNING GOD's KINGDOM;

Whereby the SEED thereof may be the better Illuſtrated and Underſtood.

Query 1. WHAT is the kingdom of God, which Chriſt ſaid he muſt preach to other cities alſo? For therefore was he ſent, Luke iv. 43.

Query 2. What is the kingdom of heaven, which firſt John the forerunner, and then Jeſus himſelf, when he began to preach, bid men repent, becauſe it was at hand? Mat. iii. 2. and chap. iv. 13. What would repentance advantage men? Would it fit men for entrance thereinto? Did thoſe that truly repented and believed, come out of the kingdom of darkneſs and Satan, and enter into the kingdom of the dear Son? 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.

Query 3. What is the kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs of God, which Chriſt (the everlaſting, wiſe, and holy Counſellor) adviſeth men firſt to ſeek? Luke vi. 33. Where is this kingdom to be found? Where is this righteouſneſs to be found? What is it hid and wrapped up in? Can it be found in any thing but what it is hid by God and wrapped up in?

Query 4. What kind of poverty of ſpirit is it, and who are thoſe poor in ſpirit, to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs? Mat. v. 3.

Query 5. How may men know, when the kingdom of God is come unto them? Is it not then manifeſt, when the ſtronger than the ſtrong man, not only knocks at the door of the heart, but caſts out Satan thence, and maketh ſpoil of his goods? Mat. xii. 28, 29.

Query 6. Who are they that ſhall enter into the kingdom of God? Are they not they who are born of water and of the Spirit? John iii. 5. Of what water? And how muſt they be born of the Spirit? Were not this worth the knowing? And they that become as little children; ſimple, innocent, (not wiſe or knowing after the fleſh) that know the breaſt that is natural and proper for them, and thirſt after and drink in the ſincere milk of the word of life, from the breaſt of the heavenly wiſdom? Luke xviii. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

Query 7. Who ſhall in no wiſe enter into the kingdom of heaven? Shall not all they be excluded who want the wedding garment, who want the true righteouſneſs? Mat. v. 20.

Query 8. What are the glad tidings of the kingdom of God? Is it not that the kingdom of God is come, and that his reign is ſet up, and ſetting up therein? Luke viii. 1. Iſa. lii. 7.

Query 9. Who are they, before whom publicans and harlots ſhall enter into the kingdom of God? Mat. xxi. 31. Who were they in that age? And who are they in this age? Oh! that men had hearts rightly to conſider and underſtand!

Query 10. Who are they that the kingdom of God ſhall be taken from, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof? Are they not the wrong builders in every age, and ſuch as are taught, by the wrong builders, to reject the living ſtone? ver. 42, 43.

Query 11. Who are the children of the kingdom that ſhall be caſt out into utter darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth? Mat. xii. 12.

Query

Query 12. Who are thoſe God reveals the myſteries of the kingdom to in every age? (Are they not his begotten ones, his babes in the Spirit?) And who are thoſe he hides the myſtery of the kingdom of life and ſalvation, and the way thereof from in every age? (Are they not the wiſe and prudent in their own apprehenſions of the letter, without the Spirit?) Mat. xiii. 11. and chap. xi. 15.

Query 13. Who are thoſe that are nigh the kingdom of God? Are they not thoſe who know that love is the fulfilling of the law, and that the ſubſtance is beyond ſhadows? Mark xii. 33, 34.

Query 14. Who are thoſe that ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men? Are they not thoſe who take upon them to expound the letter to men, and do not turn men to the Spirit, but quench it both in themſelves and others? Mat. xxiii. 13. Luke xi. 52. Iſa. xxii. 22.

Query 15. What kingdom is that, wherein he that is leaſt is greater than the greateſt prophet? Wherein he that is feeble ſhall be as David, and the houſe of David as God, as the angel of the Lord before the inhabitants of Jeruſalem? Mat. xi. 11. Zec. xii. 8.

Query 16. Who were they in the apoſtles age (and are there any ſuch in this age?) Who ſhall not taſte of death outwardly, till they have ſeen the kingdom of God come with power inwardly? Mark ix. 1.

Query 17. What kind of looking back is that, which makes a man unfit for the kingdom of God? Is it not a looking back from the plough, and not forward to the plough? And what plough is it a man muſt put his hand to, and not look back, that he may be fit for the kingdom of God? Luke ix. 62.

Query 18. What hand, what foot, what eye is it, which a man may enter into the kingdom of God with? And what hand, what foot, what eye is it, which a man cannot enter into the kingdom of God withal? Mark ix. 47.

Query 19. What is it to eat bread in the kingdom of God? Is not there the feaſt of fat things, and of wines well

well refined, made to the ſoul; and doth it not there ſup with Chriſt, and Chriſt with it? And is not the wine of the kingdom there drunk new and freſh with Chriſt? Luke xiv. 15. Iſa. xxv. 6. Rev. iii. 20. Mark xiv. 25. Luke xxii. 16, 18. Shall not the mountains there drop down new wine, and the hills flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah flow with water? And ſhall not a fountain come forth out of the houſe of the Lord, and water the valley of Shittim? Joel iii. 18.

Query 20. How may one become as a little child, that he may receive the kingdom? Muſt not that man be born anew? Muſt he not be unborn after the fleſh, and born after the Spirit? (And not only ſo, but he muſt receive, and enter into and abide in the kingdom in that child-like ſimplicity, and innocent wiſdom, whereof he is born)? Luke xviii. 7. John iii. 3.

Query 21. What is that fleſh and blood which cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and that corruption which cannot put on incorruption? 1 Cor. xv. 50. (Let him that readeth underſtand the thing, both in letter and in the Spirit).

Query 22. Who are the unrighteous, that ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? Are they not both the manifeſtly unrighteous, and alſo the ſecretly unrighteous; who, though they may preach faith in Chriſt, and the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and may think themſelves believers in him, and clothed with his righteouſneſs, yet have not received the power to become the ſons of God, nor through the Spirit have mortified the deeds of the body; but, at laſt, notwithſtanding all their profeſſion and pretence to Chriſt's righteouſneſs (out of the faith that works by love, and out of the fine linnen, in their own filthy rags); are found by him workers of iniquity, 1 Cor. vi. 6. Luke xiii. 26. Rom. viii. 13. 1 John iii. 7.

Query 23. Shall any enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they that do the will of Chriſt's Father which is in heaven? Is it enough to pray, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven? Is it not neceſſary alſo to receive that power which makes willing, and

and that nature and Spirit whoſe delight it is to do the will of the Father? Mat. vii. 21.

Query 24. Who ſhall be counted worthy of the kingdom of God? Shall not they who ſuffer for it in the holy faith and patience, and ſo are willing through the much tribulation (whether outward or inward, or both) to enter into it? 2 Theſſ. i. 4, 5. Acts xiv. 22.

Query 25. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven? who hath need of them, and whom are they given unto? Were they given only to the apoſtles? Or only to the miniſters of the church? Are they not given to every one that hath need of them, to whom God giveth underſtanding to open the myſteries of the kingdom with them? Mat. xvi. 19. The lawyers were blamed for taking away the key of knowledge, Luke xi. 52. Then they from whom they took it, ſhould have had it, that they might have entered into the kingdom of heaven by it, and not have been hindered from entering for want of it: and they taking it away from others loſt it themſelves; for when Chriſt came and preached the kingdom, they could not ſee to enter into it, but were blind and oppoſed it, Mat. xxiii. 13. And now, under the goſpel, if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his (he is not the Father's child, who hath not the Father's Spirit to lead him, Rom. viii. 4.); and he that hath the Spirit of Chriſt, hath he not the key of knowledge? 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

Query 26. What is the joyful ſound, which they that know are bleſſed? Is it not the teſtimony of the kingdom? Is it not the preaching of the goſpel of the kingdom? Which they that repent, and become little children, being begotten and born of the Spirit, believing in the Spirit and power of the Lord Jeſus, enter into, and walk in, the light of God's countenance there, Pſal. lxxxix. 15. Gal. iv. 15.

Query 27. Which is the joyful ſound of the everlaſting goſpel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, after the ages of the great apoſtaſy from the ſpirit and power of the apoſtles? Is not this, "Fear God, "and

" and give glory to him, for the hour of his judg-
" ment is come; and worſhip the Great Creator in
" ſpirit and in truth?" He that heareth this ſound, in the evidence and demonſtration of God's Spirit, doth he not hear the goſpel? He that indeed knoweth this ſound, doth he not know the joyful goſpel-ſound? And he that believeth and obeyeth it, doth he not believe and obey the goſpel, even as God hath appointed it to be preached, and obeyed by all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people? Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

Query 28. What is that kingdom that cometh not with obſervation, but is inward, and to be found within? Where men need not ſay, lo here, or lo there, but may find the Meſſiah, and his light ſhining in upon them? Luke xvii. 20, 21. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Query 29. What is that kingdom which ſtands not in word, but in power; nor is meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghoſt? 1 Cor. iv. 20. Rom. xiv. 17.

Query 30. What is it to come unto and viſit the churches of Chriſt, in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt? Is it not to come in the fulneſs of God's Spirit and power, to feed them with the bread of life, to fill their hearts with the ſtrength and virtue of life from God, as the Lord ſhall pleaſe to drop it into their ſpirits through them, and to build them up in the holy faith, that at length they may be filled with all the fulneſs of God? John xxi. 15, 16, 17. Rom. xxv. 29. Eph. iii. 19.

Query 31. Whom will the Lord aſſemble? And whom will he gather to make up his kingdom of, in the days of the goſpel? Will not the Lord aſſemble her that hateth, and gather her that is driven out, and her that he hath afflicted? And will not he make her that halteth, a remnant; and her that was caſt off, a ſtrong nation? And ſhall not the Lord reign over them in Mount Sion, from henceforth, even for ever? (For when Chriſt, the inward and ſpiritual King, comes to ſit on the throne of his Father David, inwardly and ſpiritually,

ſpiritually, he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end, Luke i. 32, 33.) Mic. iv. 6, 7. Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

Query 32. What are the places wherein the ſheep of God have been ſcattered, in the cloudy and dark day, which the Lord promiſed to deliver them out of? And what is the good paſture he will feed them in, after he hath delivered them? And what are the high mountains of Iſrael, where their fold and fat paſture ſhall be? Are not thoſe things to be fulfilled to the ſpiritual people, in the inward and ſpiritual kingdom of the Meſſiah? Ezek. xxxiv. 12. 14. John x. 3, 4.—9.—27, 28.

AN

EPISTLE

TO ALL

SERIOUS PROFESSORS

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION:

WHEREIN

A brief Touch of my Knowledge, Senſe, Belief, and Experience concerning the Godhead, the Offering up of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in his Body on the Tree, as a Propitiatory Sacrifice to the FATHER, and the Imputation of his Righteouſneſs to thoſe who believe in his Name and Power, is nakedly laid before them; wherein I am not alone, but one with thoſe who have ſo learned and experienced the ſame in the Leadings and Light of his HOLY SPIRIT.

Written in Love to them (that they might have the better Underſtanding of us, as to theſe Things, and might not think otherwiſe either of us, or of the Truth of our GOD, which we bear witneſs to, than there is Cauſe, to their own Hurt and Prejudice).

ISAAC PENINGTON.

AN EPISTLE TO All SERIOUS PROFESSORS, &c.

FRIENDS,

AFTER it pleaſed the Lord to touch my heart with the ſenſe of his truth, and to manifeſt unto me the principle of his life, in the demonſtration and power of his own Spirit, inſomuch as I could reaſon, diſpute, conſider about it no longer, but was fully ſatisfied concerning it; I ſay, after this, the love of God ſprang in me towards you, and pure deſires and breathings unto him, that ye alſo might have the way caſt up before you, and might ſo walk therein, as to come to partake of the ſame mercy and ſalvation. How I have mourned before the Lord for you, and deſired that the ſtumbling-blocks might be removed from you, and that ye might ſo ſeek as to obtain (not in that wiſdom and diſputing mind, which ſtill is ſhut out; but in that meekneſs, humility, and fear, which gives entrance) the Lord God knoweth. Yea, the deſires in me after you are ſtill living; who knoweth, but the Lord may at length hear, and with his key ſo open your hearts, and ſo anoint your eyes with his eye-ſalve, that ye may ſee, acknowledge, believe in, and receive the beloved of your ſouls, even as he now appears (after the long night of darkneſs) a comforter

of the drooping ſpirits of his people, with the pure light of life, wherein the redeemed houſe of Jacob (who ſat in darkneſs, and in the valley of the ſhadow of death, mourning after him) now in his holy rejoicing, and pure joy of ſpirit, walk before him? Oh! the Lord God viſit you, and break in upon you, as he hath done upon us, and cauſe you to ſet to your ſeals alſo, as we could not but do, that this is he whom all our days we waited for, and longed after. And now there are two or three things in my heart to open to you, how it is with me in reference to them; for indeed I have not been taught to deny any teſtimony the ſcriptures hold forth, concerning the Lord Jeſus, or any of his appearances, but am taught by the Lord more certainly and fully to own and acknowledge them.

The firſt is concerning the Godhead, which we own as the ſcriptures expreſs it, and as we have the ſenſible, experimental knowledge of it. In which, "There are "three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the "word, and the Holy Spirit; and theſe three are "one." 1 John v. 7." This I believe from my heart, and have infallible demonſtrations of; for I know three, and feel three in ſpirit, even an eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which are but one eternal God. And I feel them alſo one, and have fellowſhip with them (through the tender mercy of the Lord) in their life, and in their redeeming power. And here I lie low before the Lord in the ſenſible life, not deſiring to know and comprehend notionally, but to feel the thing inwardly, truly, ſenſibly, and effectually; yea, indeed, this is to me far beyond what I formerly knew notionally concerning them, and I cannot but invite others hither.

Now conſider ſeriouſly, if a man from his heart believe thus concerning the eternal power and Godhead; that the Father is God, the Word God, the Holy Spirit God; and that theſe are one eternal God, waiting ſo to know God, and to be ſubject to him accordingly; is not this man in a right frame of heart towards the Lord

Lord in this respect? Indeed friends, we do know God sensibly and experimentally to be a Father, Word, and Spirit, and we worship the Father in the Son by his own Spirit, and here meet with the seal of acceptance with him. Nor would we contend with you about your crimes in this respect, but that ye provoke us thereunto, in laying to our charge as if we denied the thing; whereas we do not, nor can deny the expressions which the scripture useth, nor our own sense and experience concerning the thing. I pray let this suffice, and let us all strive to know God (and his Son Jesus Christ) in his life, Spirit, and power, wherein is unity and true demonstration; and not contend about such expressions concerning things, as are beside the scriptures. For would not ye yourselves think it hard (I mean such of you as read the scriptures seriously, desiring to understand and observe what is written therein) to have a belief of things imposed on you otherwise than is there written, and otherwise than ye have the sense, knowledge, and experience of them from the Lord?

The second is concerning the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, without the gates of Jerusalem. I do exceedingly honour and esteem that offering, believing it had relation to the sins of the whole world, and was a propitiatory sacrifice to the Father therefore. And surely he that is redeemed out of the world up to God by Christ, cannot deny that Christ was his ransom, and that he was bought with a price, and therefore is to glorify God with his body and spirit, which are God's, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And, saith the apostle Peter, ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, &c. but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, 1 Peter i. 18, 19. who so offered himself up to God through the eternal Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. This we do own singly and nakedly, as in the sight of the Lord; though I must confess we do not lay the sole stress upon that which is outward and visible (though we truly and fully acknowledge it

in its place), but upon that which is inward and inviſible; upon the inward life, the inward power, the Spirit within; knowing and experiencing daily, that that is it which doth the work. The outward fleſh is not the meat indeed, nor the outward blood the drink indeed; but it is the Spirit, the life, the ſubſtance, which the birth that is born of the Spirit feeds upon and lives by. Oh! conſider ſeriouſly, and wait on the Lord, rightly to underſtand that ſcripture, John vi. 63. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth "nothing; the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are "Spirit, and they are life." What doth this ſcripture lay the ſtreſs upon? Is it not upon the quickening Spirit, and the words which the quickening Spirit ſpeaketh to the ſoul, which are living, and give life to thoſe that hear them? "Hear, and your ſoul ſhall "live!" Hear his voice who giveth life, and your ſouls ſhall live by him; but can any one live without hearing the voice of him who alone is able to quicken and raiſe the ſoul from death, and out of the grave of ſin?

The third thing is concerning the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, to ſuch as believe in his name and power, which we have felt, witneſſed, and own to be thus.

God viſits men by the light and power of his Holy Spirit, in their dead and dark eſtate, even while they are ungodly. Now, they that feel life, and in the quickenings of life, by the faith which comes from life, turn to the light and power which viſits them, by this faith in the power, they are in meaſure tranſplanted out of the unholy root, into the holy root, where they partake of the nature and virtue of the true olive-tree; and the mercy of the Lord in and through his Son Jeſus Chriſt, is ſpread over them, and their iniquities are pardoned, and their tranſgreſſions done away for his name's ſake; and they are reckoned by God, not as in the old root and unholy nature, but that whereon they lay hold by faith, and are in union with, they are reckoned by in the eye of the Lord; and they are accepted

and

and beloved in him in whom they are found, by him who tranſplanted them there, and ingrafted them thereinto. So that Chriſt is really theirs, and they his; and what he did for them in his body of fleſh is become theirs, and they have the benefit, and reap the ſweet fruits of it. And if they ſin afterwards, they have an advocate who pleads their cauſe with the Father, and who breathes livingly upon them again, and quickens faith in them, and gives them to turn from that which ran after them, and overtook them and defiled them. So that in this ſtate of true faith in, and union with, the Son, the fountain is felt ſet open for ſin and for uncleanneſs, which daily waſheth away the pollutions and ſtains of the mind, which it is liable to in the travelling ſtate.

But now to every faith this doth not belong, but to the faith only which flows from the power of the endleſs life, and which ſtands in the power. The faith which is from the power is precious, having a precious nature and virtue in it, and very precious effects flow from it. For it is the ſubſtance of things hoped for; it is of a pure nature, which hath dominion, and giveth dominion over the wicked one. There is no overcoming of the ſaints here; for as it came from the power, ſo it ſtands near the power, and engages the power of life againſt the enemy, and ſo is ſtill too hard for him. For he that reſiſteth the enemy in the true faith, ſtill overcomes him, and makes him fly, Jam. iv. 7. But that belief on Chriſt, and applying his righteouſneſs, which is not of this faith, nor in the true light of life, but according to the creature's apprehenſions concerning things, that is not of the ſame nature with this, nor hath the ſame virtue, nor produceth the ſame effects; but notwithſtanding ſuch a believing and hoping, men are ſtill in their ſins, and they are not waſhed away from them by the blood of Chriſt, nor remitted or covered by the Spirit of the Lord. And oh! that men were wary, and did take heed in this matter, that they might not miſs of true

pardon from the Lord, and so find their sins bound by him, in the days of his refreshing others!

For there is a state, wherein there is an imputation of Christ's righteousness to persons reached to by the power of the Lord, and coming up out of the ungodly state, and so a real bringing into the righteousness. For in the true growth the soul daily grows more and more out of its own righteousness, out of the dark, corrupt image, into the righteousness of Christ, and into his pure image. Thus Christ is formed in the hearts of them that truly believe, daily more and more; they receiving him as an heavenly leaven, and giving up to be leavened by him, are changed daily more and more into the newness of Spirit, even until they become a new lump, even a lump wholly leavened, so that old things are passed away, and all things become new; that is, not of old Adam any more, but all of God in Christ, all of the new nature and Spirit, which is all of it righteous in the sight of God. Now this is it all should labour for and seek after, even the kingdom of God and his righteousness, to find an entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, that they might really put off the old man with his affections and lusts, and put on the new man; the new man's nature, the new man's image, the new man's spirit, the new man's righteousness, the new man's holiness; that they might have the wedding-garment on to be married to Christ in, and might be as a bride prepared for the bridegroom. Oh! it is precious for any one to feel his soul in this state! And who would not travel and wrestle, and strive and watch, and pray and wait, that he might be thus fitted by the Spirit of the Lord for his Son Jesus Christ? For, friends, there is a coming under grace, under grace's wing, and out of shame and confusion because of sin, into the glory which is in the pure image; and there is a being changed from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, by the Spirit and power of the Lord. Oh! that such as take upon them the profession of Christianity, might feel

feel the power, and wait upon the power, and know what it is to believe in the power, and live in the power; for without this, the oppreſſed ſtate of Chriſtianity is but dead, and dry, and cold, not having the true living ſap and warmth in it. There are great deceits in the world about theſe things, but he that knoweth the truth as it is in Jeſus, who was viſited by the power, gathered to the power, and abides in the power, he hath that with him which anoints his eye and heart, and ſtrengthens them againſt the moſt ſubtile devices and deceits of the transforming ſpirit. But whoever he be that profeſſeth Chriſtianity, and is not here, he is not ſafe, but the enemy hath ways of bewitching and deluding him, which he hath not wherewith effectually to withſtand and avoid.

Now having nakedly expreſſed theſe things to you, as they are in my heart, there is a queſtion lies before me to propound to you, which deſerves your ſerious conſideration of, and ability to anſwer in the ſight of the Lord, which is this:

Queſt. Do ye rightly, truly, and fully (as the Lord requireth of you) know, eſteem, and honour the Son? Do ye own him as God hath revealed him in the ſpirit of his children, ſince the apoſtaſy? Do ye feel him as an horn of ſalvation lifted up there? Do ye find and experience him revealed within by the Father, as the ſeed of the woman, bruiſing the head of the ſerpent? Oh! this is precious knowledge, and the right way of truly knowing him as he came from the Father, lived in obedience to him, ſuffered for the ſins of the whole world, aſcended again to the Father, and now ſits with him in glory! For, indeed, it is the chief thing, and that whereon the ſoul's reſt depends, to know and feel him near. Oh! that we were one here (I mean in the inward ſenſe and acknowledgment of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt), and we ſhould ſoon be one in the other alſo!

For we, who are reproachfully by many called QUAKERS, are (for the moſt part) a people who have much and long ſought after the Lord, and after the

experimental knowledge of those truths, which are testified of and related in the holy scriptures. We sought not after a new Christ, or a new Spirit, or new doctrines concerning Christ or his Spirit; but to know Christ, so as to receive life from him, and to live to him in the life and spirit received from him; this hath been the single aim and desire of our souls. And if men could with patience consider what we hold forth, and wait till God open their understandings, they would not lay such blame upon us as they do in many respects, but find that we reverence the scriptures, believing and holding concerning the things of God according as is there expressed, from a true understanding received from the Lord, and in the true light and guidance of his Spirit. There is another question springs in my heart unto you, I beseech you to consider of it seriously, perhaps there may be a blessing to you in it.

Quest. Do ye rightly and weightily consider and embrace that counsel of Christ, Matt. vi. 33. "Seek "ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteous-"ness?" Do ye mind what Christ likens the kingdom to? Even a grain of mustard-seed, a pearl hid in a field, a little leaven, a lost piece of silver, &c. Do ye know, and are ye acquainted with that little thing which is like unto these? And do ye really and rightly seek after it? Do ye seek it where it is to be found? Do ye know the place where it is hid? And do ye take the right way to buy and purchase it? How is that? Why not by outward observation, saith Christ, but by inward sweeping the house; by keeping the eye upon it, and sweeping out the rubbish that covers it; this is the way to find it, purchase it, and possess it. Oh! that ye could all learn thus, and be thus exercised by the Spirit of the Lord daily. Surely they that thus seek shall find, and they that thus ask shall have, and they that thus knock, to them the everlasting kingdom shall be opened.

For mark the difference between the state of the law and gospel. The law was a shadow of good things

to

to come. The gospel is a state of enjoyment of the good things shadowed out under the law. The law was a type of the kingdom, of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which is set up under the gospel. In John's day the kingdom was at hand; but in the day of Christ's power the kingdom is come. Under the law there was a tabernacle pitched by man; but under the gospel the true tabernacle and temple is witnessed, which God pitcheth, and not man; and the holy, spiritual, heavenly sacrifices, and the living covenant, whereof Christ is the mediator, and the law written in the heart, and the Spirit of the Lord put within, so that his presence is as really witnessed inwardly, in that which is truly his tabernacle and temple now, as ever it was witnessed outwardly, in his outward tabernacle and temple under the law. Oh! that Christians might not have the name only, but might be in the life and in the power, wherein these things are felt and experienced; for indeed the wonders of the Lord are seen in his temple, and his name is praised there, Selah. There he breaks the shield and the bow, the spear and the battle, Selah. There the enemy is overcome; the holy victory that bringeth him under, issueth out thence, Selah. There the well is opened, and the Philistine nature hath power to stop it no more, Selah. There the treasury of life and wisdom, and the riches of God's goodness, are made manifest for ever.

Truly, friends, I have not lost any thing that ever I had, or acknowledged of God in the days of my former profession, by believing in the light which God hath now revealed in me, but have it still with me, and in greater clearness and plainness, and fuller demonstration than I then had it; but that of the flesh which mixed with it, and hindered it from being rightly serviceable to the Lord, and fully comfortable to me, that the Lord hath been removing by his searching light, and by the demonstration of his Spirit and power. And if at length, after all my deep and long misery, the Lord hath given me to meet with

with and enjoy that which is truly excellent (among thoſe whom men deſpiſe) I could heartily wiſh for you, that ye alſo might meet with and enjoy the ſame, without paſſing through that miſery and bitter anguiſh and diſtreſs of ſpirit, through which the Lord led me thereto. The Lord preſerve his people, by the arm of his mighty power, which he hath ſtretched out for them, and whereby he hath gathered them to himſelf. And thoſe which are not yet of this fold, oh! that it would pleaſe him to ſeek them out, and bring them home alſo; that the Lord may be one, and his name one amongſt us, and that that which divideth and ſcattereth from the living truth, might be ſcattered and brought to nought every where, in all who would be one, and deſire to ſerve God (with one conſent) in that which is true and pure. Amen.

A REPLY

A

REPLY

TO AN

ANSWER

OF

SOME QUERIES,

CONCERNING THE

GOSPEL-BAPTISM;

Given forth by me, I. P.

WITH

ANSWERS to ſome other QUERIES

Returned, in a PAPER ſubſcribed,

N. B.

A REPLY TO AN ANSWER of ſome QUERIES, &c.

Query 1. *WHICH is the goſpel-baptiſm, or of what kind is the baptiſm in the goſpel-ſtate? Is it outward or inward? Is it the figure of the inward baptiſm, or the inward baptiſm itſelf?*

N. B.'s Anſwer is, *It is a ſtooping to God's law.*

Reply, This is a very improper anſwer, and not at all to the thing in hand; for the query was not concerning the ſtooping or ſubjecting to baptiſm, but what the baptiſm is, which is to be ſtooped and ſubjected to, whether that be an inward or outward baptiſm? Whether it be a figure of the holy and heavenly baptiſm of the goſpel, or the holy and heavenly baptiſm itſelf? So that, in theſe words, there is no anſwer at all returned to the query, but rather the aſſerting of another thing, which the query did not mention, altogether improper in this place; for the query tends to determine what the baptiſm itſelf is, and when that is once determined, about ſtooping and ſubjecting to it, there will be no queſtion I hope between us.

Now to explain what this law of God is, which is to be ſtooped to, he ſaith, "It is the law of the "Spirit of life in Chriſt;" quoting to prove it, Rom. viii. 2. Mat. xxviii. 18, 19. Mark xvi. 16.

Reply,

Reply, That baptiſm, water-baptiſm, (as he afterwards expreſſeth it in his anſwer to this query) is the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, I never read in ſcripture. Nor doth it effect in the heart what the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus doth, which the apoſtle ſaith, made him free from the law of ſin and death; and it hath virtue and power in its nature over the law of ſin and death, which water-baptiſm hath not. The law of ſin and death is of an inward and ſpiritual nature; and the law of the Spirit of life alſo is of an inward and ſpiritual nature, ſtronger than the law of ſin and death, and is able to make free from the law of ſin and death inwardly. But water-baptiſm is an outward thing, an elementary thing, not able to reach the law of ſin and death, nor to make free from it. I beſeech you conſider, ye who look upon this to be a command and ordinance of our Lord Chriſt, are ye, or are they, who are outwardly baptized with water, made free from the law of ſin and death thereby? Nay, Paul himſelf, who was by the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus made free from the law of ſin and death, yet was not made free ſo by outward baptiſm. For if he was outwardly baptized (as I am ready to believe he was, it being uſual at that time) it was when Ananias came to him, and when the ſcales fell from his eyes, and he received ſight, Acts ix. 18. But he was not then made free from the law of ſin and death; for afterward, in his inward and ſpiritual exerciſe and holy travail, he found and complained of a law in his members, warring againſt the law in his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of ſin in his members, Rom. vii. 23. This was not a ſtate of freedom from the law of ſin; for with his fleſh he ſtill ſerved it, while in this ſtate. But when by the Spirit the fleſh was crucified, when the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus prevailed over the law of ſin and death in his members, then he was no longer under Satan's captivity by ſin, but a delivered man, made free therefrom, by the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus. Then he knew the

the truth, and the power and virtue of the truth manifeſted itſelf in him, and made him free, and he was free indeed; and ſaid no more he could not do the good he would, nor forbear doing the evil he would not; but he was more than a conqueror over the evil, and ſet at liberty to work righteouſneſs, and could do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthened him. Oh! that ye that plead ſo much for outward water, knew this law writ in your hearts, and the effectual power and virtue thereof freeing you from the law of ſin and death, and then ye would no more attribute that to an outward thing (or to your obedience as to ſuch an outward thing) which belongs to the Spirit and power of the Lord Jeſus, and to the law of his life inwardly written in the heart.

Another ſcripture he brings to prove water-baptiſm to be the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, is Mat. xxviii. 19.

Reply, If it were granted, that Chriſt did in that place command water-baptiſm, yet that would not prove it to be the law of the Spirit of life in him. The law of the Spirit of life in him is a deep thing, (I beſeech you do not miſtake it) and hath mighty effects in the ſoul, which water-baptiſm never had, nor can have upon any. The law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath that virtue and power from God in its nature, which water-baptiſm is not capable of. The figures, the outward repreſentations, have not a capacity to receive that from God, which the inward law and ſubſtance hath.

But that outward baptizing with water is there commanded by Chriſt, is not at all manifeſt from that ſcripture, but rather the contrary, if it be well minded. For Chriſt ſaith, all power was given him in heaven and earth, and bids them go and baptize. Doth he ſay with water? Nay; doth he not ſay into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit? So that now, when the goſpel is preached in the Spirit and power of God, and his Spirit and power reacheth to our hearts, we

are

are by that Spirit and power both taught and baptized inwardly, gathered into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and baptized into their name. And he that doth this in the heart, teacheth the heart to call this the goſpel-baptiſm; and to call that which came forth in the hands of the fore-runner, the type, or figure of this, the repreſentation of this, the ſhadow of the goſpel-baptiſm, but not the goſpel-baptiſm itſelf. Indeed we dare not call John's baptiſm, or water-baptiſm, the goſpel-baptiſm, or Chriſt's baptiſm; the Lord, who hath manifeſted things to us, and taught us to put a difference between things that really differ, would judge and condemn us for ſo doing.

Mark further, Chriſt, who ſaith, "All power in "heaven and earth is given me," and therefore bid them go teach and baptize, yet withal bid them wait for the ſame Spirit and power which was given him, Acts i. 4.—8. And then having his Spirit and power, wherewith he inwardly taught and baptized, might they not be able therewith to reach the heart and conſcience, and ſpiritually both to teach and baptize, as inſtruments in God's hand, in the ſpringings of his life and power in them?

Now to manifeſt this further; for I feel the Lord opening my heart in this thing, and I hope it is for your ſakes, (Oh! ye miſtaken ones in this weighty buſineſs!) that the Lord may explain things of this nature to you, and do you good thereby. To whom was this commiſſion or command, in the authority and power of God's Spirit, given, to go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name, &c.? Was it not eſpecially given to the apoſtles, who were eſpecially gifted thereunto? And was not Paul one; yea, one of the chief, made ſo by God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? And he being in a ſpecial manner ſent to the Gentiles, or Heathen nations, (for the Jews were but one nation) did not this commiſſion extend to him, and this command lie upon him? Now if this command did extend to inward, ſpiritual, goſpel-baptizing,

tizing, with the Spirit and power of the Lord Jeſus, he had it as full as any of them; but if it be underſtood of water-baptiſm, we do not find that he had any ſuch commiſſion, but rather otherwiſe. Read his commiſſion, Acts xxvi. 18. is there any thing of water-baptiſm in it? There is remiſſion of ſins, which depends upon believing and turning to God, in his illuminating Spirit and power, but nothing of water-baptiſm. And mark, it is God that opens mens eyes, and it is God that opens their hearts, and inwardly turns them from darkneſs to light, and from Satan's power to God; yet Paul was ſent by the Lord to do this. And is it an harder matter inwardly to baptize, than to do this? So that it is not Paul, but the Lord that opens the eyes, and turns men; yet the Lord ſent Paul to do it, and ſurely the Lord enabled him, by his Spirit and power, to do what he ſent him to do.

Object. *But though it is not here particularly expreſſed, yet it may be implied or intended. Or if this commiſſion did not reach to him, the former apoſtolick commiſſion would, he being made ſo extraordinary an apoſtle. Or at leaſt it would reach him as a teaching diſciple; for he that hath authority to teach the nations, hath alſo authority to baptize them.*

Anſ. No. Paul neither by this commiſſion, nor by the apoſtolick commiſſion, nor by his diſcipleſhip, had any authority or miſſion from God to baptize, if ye take baptiſm in this place for baptizing with outward water, as he himſelf expreſsly ſaith, "Chriſt ſent "me not to baptize," (ſpeaking of water-baptiſm) "but to preach the goſpel," 1 Cor. i. 17. Nay, he thanks God that he baptized none of them, to his remembrance, but Criſpus, Gaius, and the houſhold of Stephanus, ver. 14. 16. Now if he had looked upon water-baptiſm as Chriſt's ordinance, and as the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, would he thank God he had obeyed it no more?

Object. *But he gives the reaſon of that, leſt any ſhould ſay he had baptized in his own name.*

Anſ. Why, perſons might ſay he preached in his own name, yet that would not have excuſed him from preaching. No more would mens ſaying he baptized in his own name, excuſe him from baptizing, if water-baptiſm had been Chriſt's command and ordinance.

The laſt place he brings to prove water-baptiſm to be the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, is Mark xvi. 16. "He that believeth, and is baptized, "ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be "damned."

Reply, This ſheweth the neceſſity of the goſpel-baptiſm, but this doth not expreſs which the goſpel-baptiſm is, whether an inward or outward waſhing. We know, having been taught by the Lord, that there is no ſalvation without inward waſhing, which is alſo very demonſtrable to others; but God forbid that all ſhould be damned, that are not baptized with outward water.

He ſaith, *This law was confirmed by them that had the Spirit-baptiſm, being commanded to be obeyed by them that had the Spirit, Acts* x. 47, 48.

Reply, That Peter did command perſons to be baptized with water, and that John's baptiſm, or water-baptiſm, was made uſe of in thoſe days, and that John had it from God, and that it was done in God's name, this is not denied; but that water-baptiſm was Chriſt's baptiſm, or the goſpel-baptiſm, this place doth not prove.

He ſaith further, *The kind of this baptiſm is water-baptiſm*, bringing Mat. iii. 16. and Acts viii. 38, 39. to prove it.

Reply, Mat. iii. 16. only proves that Chriſt was baptized with water, but doth not prove that water-baptiſm is the goſpel-baptiſm. If I could prove by ſcripture expreſsly, that Chriſt was circumciſed, yet that would not prove that therefore that was to be the goſpel-circumciſion. So though it be manifeſt, that Chriſt was baptized by John, with his water-baptiſm, yet that doth not at all prove that John's water-baptiſm is Chriſt's goſpel-baptiſm. The end of John's baptizing

baptizing with water was, that Chriſt might be made manifeſt, John i. 31. And when he is made manifeſt, (when he who is the word, who is life, is made manifeſt, 1 John i. 1, 2.) then men muſt come to him, to be baptized by him with his baptiſm, which is with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire, Mat. iii. 11. or with the Spirit of judgment and burning, Iſa. iv. 4.

That other place of Acts viii. 38, 39. doth not at all prove that water-baptiſm is the goſpel-baptiſm, but only that Philip did baptize the eunuch with water, which is not a thing denied by us. Yea, what if I ſhould grant, that the Lord did honour it as much as any ſhadow, or more than other ſhadows, by letting it have a longer time, and otherwiſe; yet that will not prove it to be Chriſt's baptiſm, or a goſpel-ordinance. And if men do take it up in tenderneſs of ſpirit, bowing to the Lord, it is ſo much the better; yet it is not eaſy to believe that all do ſo; and thoſe that do ſo, may err in their judgments, notwithſtanding; though I am perſuaded, the Lord is tender to perſons that do things in tenderneſs of heart to him, notwithſtanding ſome error or miſtake in their judgments.

Query 2. *What is it that is to be waſhed in the goſpel-ſtate? Is it the outward or inward man? And what is the inward man to be waſhed with?*

Anſ. His anſwer is, it is the body, the whole man or woman to go into the water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; ſo that the ſoul comes to be ſanctified by the word and Spirit. For the proof of which he quotes John viii. 32. and chap. xv. 3.

Reply, That the whole body was to go into the water, according to John's baptiſm, is granted; but that this is the goſpel-baptiſm, or Chriſt's baptiſm, is denied by us. It is the inward Jew that is to be waſhed in the goſpel-ſtate, and is inward water, ſpiritual water, that he is to be waſhed with. I pray conſider that ſcripture ſeriouſly, (and the Lord give you the true underſtanding thereof) Zech. xiii. 1. Doth not that ſcripture ſpeak of the goſpel-ſtate? What foun-

tain is it that is opened in the goſpel-ſtate? Is it an outward fountain of outward waters, which is opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, to waſh it away? The Lord knoweth of what nature ſin is, and with what water it is to be waſhed away, and therefore openeth that fountain in the houſe of David in the goſpel-ſtate, which is proper to waſh it away with. What is the houſe of David? Who is the Jew in the goſpel-ſtate? What is the tabernacle or houſe of David that is raiſed up then? What is the fountain that is opened there for ſin, and for uncleanneſs? Can ſin be waſhed away from any heart and conſcience, but by the water of this fountain? And is not the goſpel-baptiſm with this water? Do not thoſe that are waſhed with this water feel the true waſhing, and know it certainly, evidently, infallibly, in the demonſtration of God's Spirit, to be the true baptiſm; not the figurative, outward waſhing of the body, but the real inward waſhing of the ſoul? There is the waſhing of regeneration, Tit. iii. 5. which is with that which regenerates, which the water of the fountain of life and holineſs doth, which God opens in the heart, and waſheth the ſoul with, and cauſeth the ſoul to waſh in; but the outward water, which waſheth the outward body, hath no ſuch nature or virtue in it, nor ever was appointed by God to produce any ſuch effect. That the ſoul is ſanctified by the word and Spirit, is granted: but that the ſoul is not ſanctified by the word and Spirit, unleſs the body is waſhed with outward water, that is denied; and the ſcriptures afore-mentioned by him, of John viii. 32. and chap. xv. 3. do not at all prove any ſuch thing. Now the goſpel-obedience is to Chriſt's baptiſm, not to John's baptiſm. And the ſoul that is ſubject to Chriſt's baptiſm, doth not live in diſobedience, for not taking up John's baptiſm; which God doth not allow him to do; but in the goſpel-ſtate, every one is to hear the Son, the Shepherd of the ſoul, and follow him the ſubſtance, and not Moſes's circumciſion or John's baptiſm.

Query

Query 3. *What is waſhed away by the goſpel-baptiſm? Is it the filth of the outward body or fleſh? Or the filth of the ſoul? And with what water is the filth of the ſoul to be waſhed away?*

Anſ. Sin is waſhed away by the goſpel-baptiſm; for the proof whereof he quotes Acts xxii. 16. Rom. vi. 17, 18.

Reply, Thus far we agree, that ſin is waſhed away by the goſpel-baptiſm; but what that baptiſm is which waſheth away ſin, herein we greatly differ. He affirmeth it to be outward water, and the waſhing of the outward man therewith. I affirm it to be inward water, from the inward holy fountain which God opens in the houſe of David, whereby the ſoul and conſcience is waſhed from ſin, and from uncleanneſs. That place of Acts xxii. 16. ſpeaks of Paul's being baptized, and waſhing away his ſins; but doth not ſay, that outward waſhing the body with outward water is the waſhing away of ſins; but bids him waſh away his ſins, calling on the name of the Lord. And thus the waſhing away of ſins is at this day experienced. The Lord manifeſts ſin, turns the mind againſt it, and cauſeth a cry to the Lord, and then the Lord opens the fountain, cauſeth the pure water to flow, which the ſoul is waſhed with; and ſo far as it is waſhed therewith, it is clean in the ſight of God, and hath the inward ſenſe of its cleanneſs from the Lord. Yet that there was a figurative waſhing away of ſins by John's baptiſm, I do not deny; for it was unto repentance, and they thereby profeſſed repentance, and were to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," Mat. iii. 8. Nor doth that other place (Rom. vi. 17, 18.) prove, that waſhing the body with outward water purgeth away any ſin, or maketh free from ſin; but that which makes free from ſin, is the power, virtue, and life of truth felt in the heart, waſhing and cleanſing it. It is receiving the truth in the love of it, and being moulded into the nature of it, believing it in the evidence and demonſtration of God's Spirit, and obeying it in the obedience of the new nature,

mind, and Spirit. And the anſwer of a good conſcience comes from the inward baptiſm, from the waſhing which the apoſtle calls ἀντίτυπον, the anti-type, 1 Pet. iii. 21. which baptiſm is not the waſhing away the filth of the fleſh or body; but an inward baptiſm, which ſo waſheth inwardly, that the anſwer of a good conſcience is preſently felt, in the ſight and preſence of God. And then the ſoul knows what water it was waſhed with, which was able to produce, and did produce this effect.

He ſaith, *And thus it appears; Firſt it takes off diſobedience.*

Reply, What is it takes off diſobedience? The truth as it is in Jeſus, the life and power of truth, felt and working in the heart, deſtroys the diſobedient nature, and takes away the diſobedience thereof; but outward waſhing of the body doth not, though men may apprehend there is an outward command for it, and judge they do it in obedience to that outward command. But obedience is from true underſtanding of the mind and will of God, and from that holy light of his Spirit wherein the holy underſtanding is given. And in this obedience the Lord's juſtification is witneſſed; which is not witneſſed in the other; I mean in that which men call obedience to that which they account a literal command, according to their conceivings and apprehenſions.

Secondly, *As it leads perſons unto Chriſt; for which he quotes Rom. vi. 2, 3. Gal. iii. 27.*

Reply, That which leads unto Chriſt, and into the truth as it is in him, the children of the new covenant know, who are drawn by the Father, and are taught and learn of him to come to the Son, John vi. 44, 45. And how can we give that honour to John's baptiſm, or outward waſhing the body, which belongs to the Father, and his powerful Spirit? To be baptized into Chriſt is a great thing. To be buried with Chriſt by baptiſm into death, is a precious ſtate, and effected by the inward work of the Spirit in the heart, working againſt ſin, working the mind out of ſin, into the

nature,

nature, Spirit, and life of Chriſt. And the being baptized into Chriſt, is the real putting on Chriſt. It is the effect of knowing the truth as it is in Jeſus, which cauſeth the putting off of the old man, and the renewing in the Spirit of the mind, and putting on the new, Epheſ. iv. 22, 23, 24. But John's baptiſm, or the waſhing the body with outward water, doth none of theſe things, but is only a type or repreſentation of what is done in and by the inward baptiſm.

He adds further, *And ſo the ſoul receives Chriſt in his prophetical and prieſtly office; ſo by Chriſt we are delivered from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, that we may perfect holineſs in the fear of God.*

Reply, The kingdom of Chriſt is ſpiritual, the kingdom of Chriſt is within, and he that would truly know him as he is King, Prophet, and Prieſt, muſt hear his knocks, know his voice, open to him, and let him in, and then he will manifeſt himſelf there, and the ſoul ſhall know what he is, even his King, Prieſt, and Prophet, and feel him exerciſing all theſe holy offices, in the authority and power of his Father, in the heart. This is precious knowledge indeed. Yea, he ſhall know him with his fan in his hand, thoroughly purging his floor from all unbelief, from all diſobedience, from all chaffineſs and earthlineſs; yea, from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit; for his fan turns againſt them all, and his Spirit of judgment and burning flames inwardly againſt them all; and as they are conſumed and burnt up, the pure fear of the Lord is increaſed in the heart, wherein holineſs is begun, and at length perfected, by the thorough circumciſion and baptiſm of the Spirit. But the Corinthians were not cleanſed from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit by water-baptiſm, but were afterwards exhorted by Paul to do it.

Query 4. *What water is it that the inward Iſrael ſhall be ſprinkled with, that they may be clean? Is it not inward water, ſpiritual water? And can any be clean or baptized in the ſight of God, that are not baptized with this*

water, wherewith God ſprinkleth and waſheth his inward and ſpiritual Iſrael?

Anſ. Baptiſm is not ſprinkling, nor ſo rendered by the Spirit, but baptize; baptize is to dip or put into the water.

Reply, When God ſprinkleth his inward Iſrael, with the water which he hath promiſed to ſprinkle with, he doth ſufficiently cleanſe them; for whom the Lord ſprinkleth with this water, they are cleanſed thereby, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. And this relates to the goſpel-ſtate; for a new heart is immediately promiſed, ver. 26. which is the promiſe of the goſpel-covenant. And the blood of ſprinkling in the new covenant doth ſufficiently waſh and cleanſe, Heb. xii. 24. Rev. i. 5. ſprinkling and dipping are but figures; but they are both comprehended in the ſubſtance, which we ſhould wait inwardly to feel and experience. The water which Chriſt ſpeaks of, John iii. 5. (which place he quotes) is not outward, but of the ſame nature with the Spirit, whereof the ſoul is waſhed and born again, and riſeth up in the new life with Chriſt.

He ſaith, *The inward fits for the outward.*

Reply, It is true, John's baptiſm did require inward qualifications, (in which reſpect it went beyond circumciſion) and ſo, where thoſe qualifications were found, who could forbid water? But Chriſt's baptiſm, the baptiſm with Spirit and fire to purify the mind and burn up the droſs, is of an higher miniſtration, and a far more glorious baptiſm than that, Mat. iii. 11. "He ſhall baptize you:" *you*, what *you? You* whom I have baptized with water. So that thoſe whom he had baptized to repentance, he tells of another baptiſm, a more glorious baptiſm than his, which happy are they that wait for, and feel accompliſhed in them.

Query 5. *What is the goſpel-circumciſion? Is it not an inward and ſpiritual circumciſion? and is not the circumciſing knife, wherewith the inward Iſrael is circumciſed, inward and ſpiritual? And is not the goſpel-baptiſm, wherewith the inward Iſrael is waſhed, as inward and ſpiritual*

as the gospel-circumcision? Is not this circumcision and washing of the same nature, and effected without outward hands?

Ans. It is inward, spiritual, heavenly, that which God works by the knife of his word, Heb. iv. 12. Hos. vi. 5.

Reply, This is true; we whom God hath called, quickened, enlightened, circumcised, and baptized, experience it so; and happy is he, if he experience it so also. For the word is living, and makes alive; the word is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and it doth inwardly pierce to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, (Oh! this is a blessed experience inwardly, wherever it is felt!) and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And this word came to the prophets, and did hew through the prophets, and God's judgments by this word were as a light that went forth. This word is the word of life, and the life is manifested in it, as the apostles knew in their day, 1 John i. 2. and as God's gathered ones know in this day.

But let him take heed, lest he put the letter, or outward descriptions of heavenly things, for the word; for the kingdom or gospel-state stands not in such kind of words, but in power, 1 Cor. iv. 20. and the apostles were made able ministers of the New-Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit ministereth life, 2 Cor. iii. 6. So we distinguish the word of life, (the quick piercing word that giveth life) from the words which came from it, Acts v. 20. which words are also living, as they come from the life; otherwise, in the mouth, understanding, or comprehension of him who is not living, (nor in a true sense and understanding of them) they are not life. So men should not strive to comprehend things with that outward understanding, which can never attain thereto, but wait to receive the understanding from God, whereby they may know him that is true, and his gospel-ordinance, and the holy laws of his kingdom, and be found in the obedience thereof to him in the Spirit.

Now

Now granting the goſpel-circumciſion to be inward and ſpiritual, how can he make the goſpel-baptiſm to be of a nature inferior to it, even outward and carnal, viz. a waſhing with the elementary water of this creation, and not with the inwardly ſanctifying and cleanſing water of life, which God ſprinkleth upon his ſpiritual Iſrael, and alſo plunges their ſouls into? And conſider ſeriouſly, whether the apoſtle, ſpeaking both of circumciſion and baptiſm, Col. ii. 11, 12. did intend either of them as to the outward, and not rather both of them as to the inward, wherein the true inward ſpiritual circumciſing, and alſo the true inward baptizing, is witneſſed, and both without hands; for neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion avails (no more doth outward waſhing the body, or not waſhing it avail) but a new creature; the putting off of the body of the ſins of the fleſh by the circumciſion and baptiſm of Chriſt, this avails, and is of great eſteem with God.

Query 6. *What is the one baptiſm of the ſpiritual Iſrael, without which there is no ſalvation? Can there be any ſalvation without the inward waſhing of the ſoul? May there not be ſalvation without the outward waſhing of the body?*

Anſw. That which Chriſt Jeſus commanded; for there is but one baptiſm commanded, and that leads us to Chriſt and God.

Reply, Was not John's baptiſm commanded, which was an outward waſhing? And is not the inward waſhing commanded alſo? Was not Iſrael commanded to circumciſe their hearts, and was not that an inward circumciſion? And were they not alſo commanded to waſh their hearts from wickedneſs, and was not that an inward waſhing or baptiſm? How could they do either of theſe? Why, did not Moſes direct them to the word nigh in their mouth and heart, whereby both theſe might be done? And can either of theſe be done in any heart, but by the operation of this word of life inwardly in the heart? We know, *There is no other name under heaven*, nor way *to be ſaved, but Chriſt* the word of life, and light of men. But they that are ſaved

ſaved by him, muſt know him as a living ſtone within, and come from all elſe in their hearts to him (as to a precious foundation-ſtone of life), and be new-created by him, circumciſed and baptized into him, and ſo walk in him, the new and living way, and ſerve God his Father, in the newneſs of the Spirit; and not in the oldneſs of the letter; which happy are they that underſtand what it is, and are found in this obedience to the Lord, and in thus worſhipping him in his Spirit and truth, which is the goſpel-ſervice and worſhip. For men may eaſily miſtake about the letter; but the new birth doth not miſtake concerning the Spirit, nor the true ſheep concerning the voice of Chriſt.

Query 7. *How are men buried with Chriſt by baptiſm into death? Is it not an inward ſpiritual death, that men are thus buried with Chriſt into? And is it not effected by an inward ſpiritual baptiſm?*

Anſw. By water-baptiſm; for Chriſt was buried, ſo are we. Chriſt was buried by baptiſm in the water, ſo are we.

Reply, Chriſt was outwardly circumciſed; ſo are we alſo circumciſed; not outwardly, as Chriſt was. Chriſt was not circumciſed to effect any thing upon him (for he needed it not), but for our ſakes. And he was baptized for our ſakes alſo, that we alſo might be circumciſed, and baptized with the circumciſion and baptiſm which we need, which is the circumciſing and baptizing of our ſouls, and not the circumciſing or waſhing of our bodies.

He adds, *Chriſt did it to fulfil all righteouſneſs; we to fulfil the righteous law and will of God, we thereby entering into covenant with God, whereby we ſet to his ſeal* (I ſuppoſe he means, *our ſeal) that he is true.*

Reply, It remains yet to be proved, that baptizing with water is God's law and will in the goſpel-ſtate. I am ſure there are thoſe that are taught otherwiſe by him that teacheth all his children, from the leaſt to the greateſt, in the new covenant. And the new covenant is an inward covenant; which they that hear God's voice therein, and have his law written in their hearts, and obey it, are led by him more and more into.

into. Now the new covenant is not made with every thirſty one after the living waters, but only ſuch as come to Chriſt in the drawings and teachings of his Father; and when they are come to Chriſt, incline their ears, and hearken diligently to him, Iſa. lv. 1, 2, 3. ſuch aſſuredly know and enjoy the ſure mercies of David, having God to be their Shepherd to ſpread their table for them; and they eat that which is good, and are ſatisfied with the fat things of his houſe, and ſo can ſet to their ſeal that God is true and faithful, who hath not only promiſed ſuch things, but is daily fulfilling and making them good in and to their ſouls.

Query 8. *What is that baptiſm, from whence there certainly and conſtantly ariſeth the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God? Doth not this always ariſe from the inward baptiſm, from the waſhing away of that which defileth the conſcience? Is not then the conſcience thereby made good and holy in the ſight of God? And doth it not then anſwer the holy will, law, and Spirit, of the holy and good God?*

Anſw. The baptiſm of water; being that which Chriſt commanded.

Reply, Water-baptiſm, or outward waſhing of the body, cannot make the conſcience good; for a man may do that upon a miſtake, through error of judgment, and go unchanged into it, and come unchanged out of it. But the inward circumciſion and inward baptiſm, doth really cut off and waſh away the ſin and filth of the conſcience, and ſo make it good; and then the good conſcience doth anſwer to God, in what he teacheth and requireth. But that water-baptiſm was commanded by Chriſt, is ſtill denied on our part, and unproved on his.

He ſaith, *A clear conſcience ariſeth from a true conformity to the law of God.*

Reply, This is very true. But what is the law of God in the new covenant, but what he writes in the heart? God is the teacher of his people in the new covenant, and what he teacheth and requireth of them by his Spirit, is their law. Chriſt is their law-giver, and he gives forth his law of life, from his Spirit of life, to

thoſe

thoſe that wait for it, Iſa. xlii. 2. And he likewiſe opens the ſcriptures, and ſhews what God taught and required of former ages, and of this preſent age. He ſhews what the ſhadows of the law were, and what the miniſtration of the prophets and John was, and what the miniſtration of the Son is; who is faithful in all his houſe to every one there, as a Son, to give the law of the Spirit of life to them; even as Moſes the ſervant was to give, the outward law to thoſe of his houſe. So that it is not ſufficient to read a ſcripture, or ſcriptures, and ſay this was commanded, and this was practiſed of old; but to wait to know how it was commanded, and how practiſed, and of what nature it was, whether of the everlaſting nature of the kingdom, which is to remain; or of an outward elementary nature, which might be ſhaken and paſs away. For it was the will of God, that all ſuch things ſhould be ſhaken and paſs away, that the kingdom itſelf alone, which cannot be ſhaken, might remain, Heb. xii. 27.

Concluſion. *Oh! that people knew and experienced the baptiſm which is the ſubſtance, and then they would not idolize that baptiſm, or outward waſhing, which in its nature can be no more than a ſign, ſignification, or repreſentation of that which is the ſubſtance!*

Anſw. Our baptiſm, which is the goſpel-baptiſm, being baptized into Chriſt, is that which brings us to the ſubſtance, Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, the ſubſtance of all things. So that ſigns or ſignifications are nothing to us, but Chriſt is all to our ſouls.

Reply, That water-baptiſm is the goſpel-baptiſm, can never be proved by you, it being neither the nature of the goſpel, nor commanded by Chriſt the law-giver in the goſpel. And that this waſhing with outward water is the baptizing into Chriſt, is a very low and dark apprehenſion, far from truth, and the right underſtanding of the ſcriptures, and the experience of thoſe who are baptiſed with Chriſt's baptiſm. And that which brings to Chriſt, is the Father, by his drawings;

drawings; not outward baptizing, or washing the outward man with outward water; that is but a bodily exercise, and bodily exercises profit little, so far are they from bringing to Christ the substance. And as for what he saith concerning signs and significations; oh! that it were so indeed, that they were nothing to you, but Christ were all to your souls! For if it were so indeed, could ye thus cry up a figure or shadow of the gospel-baptism, and be so ignorant of the substance. Do the Jews know the inward circumcision? Or do ye know the inward baptism, any more than the Jews knew the inward circumcision? Read that scripture, Rom. ii. 28, 29. and the Lord apply it home to your souls; "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, "neither is that circumcision which is outward in the "flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and "circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit, and "not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but "of God." Now may not the Spirit of God say in these our days (yea, of a truth the Spirit of our God doth say so, and many have heard his voice so speaking), he is not a Christian which is one outwardly, neither is that gospel-baptism, which is outward on the flesh; but he is a Christian which is one inwardly, and the gospel-baptism is that of the heart in the Spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. The Jews praised the outwardly circumcised, and ye praise the outwardly baptized; but God praiseth the inwardly circumcised and washed. So that their justification and praise is of him, and they matter not the justification or praise of man.

He adds farther, *Neither do we these things, but to obey him and follow his footsteps that he went before us in, and so he is our leader and commander.*

Reply, Every practice of his he doth not lead or command his disciples to follow him in. He was circumcised outwardly; are we to take it up because it was his footstep? No more are we to take up the outward washing, because it was his footstep. But we are to take up that circumcision which cutteth off that which

which is evil from us, and crucifieth to the world; and we are alſo to take up that baptiſm which inwardly baptiſeth and effectually cleanſeth from ſin. Oh! how plain are theſe things, where the eye is ſingle, and the mind not blinded or prejudiced with its own conceivings and miſapprehenſions!

He adds yet, *So that we are not idolizing any thing, but following Chriſt in the way he went before us in.*

Reply, I wiſh from my heart ye were not idolizing John's baptiſm, or water-baptiſm, by ſetting it in the place of Chriſt's baptiſm, and attributing that to it which belongs to Chriſt's baptiſm, and not to it. To affirm that water-baptiſm is the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt, and that ſtooping to it is ſtooping to the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt, and that the ſoul cannot be ſanctified without going into the outward water; for till then it is in diſobedience, and charged as a tranſgreſſor; and the inward man cannot be waſhed while living in diſobedience, and that ſin is waſhed away by this outward water-baptiſm, and that this takes off diſobedience, and ſo is the anſwer of a good conſcience in obedience to God, and that it leads perſons into Chriſt, with more of this nature; what is this but the idolizing of an outward elementary creature and creaturely action, and an undervaluing of that water and blood which alone can do this? Now to term this idolizing is no reflecting on Chriſt; but on mens error of judgment, and their erroneous practices which enſue thereupon; much leſs is it blaſphemy, although Chriſt himſelf was accounted a blaſphemer for teſtifying the truth, by the profeſſors of that age; and ſuch a judgment may his followers meet with now, from the profeſſors of this age.

He ſaith further, *I know that the pretence of all this is the baptiſm of the Spirit.*

Reply, He is greatly miſtaken. It is not a *pretence*, but a feeling of the baptiſm of the Spirit, by the water of the fountain of life which God opens in the heart, and the being born of this water and of the Spirit. By this means we came to know the baptiſm which

which ſaves, and the Spirit's waſhing and regenerating us therewith; and if we ſhould give the honour of this baptiſm to the waſhing of the body with outward water, we ſhould ſin againſt the Lord, and be unfaithful in the teſtimony he hath given us to bear.

He ſaith, *Take notice that the baptiſm of the Spirit is a promiſe, not a duty.*

Reply, That it is a *promiſe* is granted; but it is alſo a *duty* to receive the promiſe, and to give up to be baptized by him. Now to open this a little; for I write in love and tender good-will, and in that which opens my heart. The Spirit of the Lord did ſtrive with the old world. What did he ſtrive for? Did he not ſtrive to reclaim them from ſin? To circumciſe them? To waſh them? God gave his good Spirit to the Jews to inſtruct them. To what end to inſtruct them, but that they might circumciſe the foreſkin of their hearts, and be no more ſtiff-necked; and that they might be inwardly waſhed in heart from their wickedneſs, and their vain thoughts might no longer lodge within them. So that the inward circumciſion and the inward baptiſm of the ſoul and conſcience (from whence is the anſwer of a good conſcience), was before either the outward circumciſion or outward baptiſm, and is the ſubſtance, whereof the other were but figures. The Spirit was not only promiſed in the time of the goſpel, but was alſo promiſed in the time of the law (though more abundantly promiſed to be poured forth in the goſpel days), Prov. i. 23. Now what doth it do when poured forth? Doth it not enlighten, quicken, lead, touch, waſh, or ſanctify, purge out the old leaven, and leaven with the new leaven of the kingdom? Here is true underſtanding and true experience. Oh! that ye might come to witneſs and partake of it! Do ye deſire to obey? Oh! that ye were taught of God to know Chriſt, as the Father reveals him inwardly, and to deny and put off all that is contrary unto him, that ye may be baptized into him, and be found in him, filled and clothed with his righteous Spirit, life, and nature; in which

righteous

righteous Spirit, life, and nature, the true circumciſion and the true baptiſm is witneſſed.

He ſaith, *The promiſe of the Spirit, John calls the baptiſm of the Spirit*, Mat. iii. 11.

Reply, Though the Spirit, when poured out according to the promiſe of the Father, did baptize ſeveral ways; yet that is not it which John there calls the baptiſm of the Spirit; but the baptiſm of the Spirit is the inward purging away of ſin and filth, by the Spirit and its fire, or by the Spirit of judgment and burning; which thoſe that were baptized by John were afterwards to expect and wait for, that with his fan their floor might be purged, their chaff burnt up, and the wheat gathered into the garner, ver. 12.

He ſaith again, *Take notice, that the being baptized with the Spirit, or having the Spirit, does not excuſe us of our being baptized in water, but rather fits us for it.*

Reply, If baptiſm with water were a command of Chriſt, being baptized with the Spirit, or having the Spirit, would not excuſe from it. But if baptizing with the Spirit be the goſpel-baptiſm, and that which was figured out or repreſented by John's baptiſm, then we are not to turn back from the ſubſtance to the figure, or from Chriſt's command to his diſciples, to God's command by John to his diſciples.

He quotes Acts viii. 29. compared with ver. 38, 39. *Where* (ſaith he) *we may ſee, that the Spirit was in the work of the adminiſtration of water-baptiſm, as it leads men to the truth of the goſpel, and therefore it is that the apoſtle ſaith*, that "by one Spirit we are baptized "into one body," 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Reply, God, from whom the law was, and the prophets, and John's preaching and baptiſm, did work in them all by his Spirit; and John's miniſtration being the higheſt, God might pleaſe to work moſt therein. But that this is Chriſt's baptiſm, commanded by him in the goſpel, or the water thereof the water wherewith Chriſt waſheth the ſoul, or the water of regeneration whereby God regenerates, that we cannot but deny, being taught of God, and having experience of

the contrary. Yea, it is manifeſtly but a ſhadow of Chriſt's baptiſm, and not the baptiſm itſelf; not the baptiſm of his Spirit and fire, wherewith alone the ſoul can be inwardly purged, Mat. iii. 11. compared with Iſa. iv. 4.

But that water-baptiſm leads men into the truth of the goſpel, is his great miſtake. He had ſaid but a few lines before, *that it is the office and work of the Spirit of God to lead us into all truths of the goſpel*; let him ſtick to that, and wait to experience that, and not attribute that to a dead thing, which belongs to the living Spirit.

And whereas he interpreteth that ſcripture, 1 Cor. xii. 13. of outward viſible baptiſm with outward water, that is a very manifeſt miſapprehenſion (I wiſh he did not ſo miſunderſtand and miſinterpret ſcriptures, for want of the right key which opens them). For all that are baptized with outward water (whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free), are not baptized into one body; but all that are inwardly baptized by the one Spirit, are baptized into the one body, whereof Chriſt is head, and they all drink into one Spirit; in which Spirit they all have life to act in the body, and have a living ſenſe of their place and ſervice in the body, which they who only are baptized with water have not.

Thus far in way of Reply to his Anſwers to thoſe Queries, which did flow from me, as life and the love of God ſprang up in me, without any premeditation at all; which retain their truth, evidence, and ſtrength, notwithſtanding all that he hath ſaid to invalidate or weaken them. Now follow his Queries returned to conſideration, which it is on my heart to return an Anſwer to, in the nakedneſs and plainneſs of truth, as the Lord hath pleaſed to open and give me the knowledge and experience of the things queried of.

Query

Query 1. *Whether the baptiſm of the Spirit be not a promiſe, and the work of God to give it to his creatures, and the baptiſm of afflictions an imputation of wicked men; and but one baptiſm commanded by Chriſt as a duty to ſubmit unto, if not water-baptiſm, what is it then?*

Anſw. The baptiſm Chriſt commands his diſciples to ſubmit to, is his own baptiſm, the baptiſm of his Spirit. The true diſciples of Chriſt are inward Jews and inward Chriſtians, and they are to ſubmit to the inward circumciſion and baptiſm of Chriſt their Lord. They are to be waſhed inwardly with the water of that fountain, which God opens to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem for ſin and for uncleanneſs, Zech. xiii. 1. Doth God ſet this open for the inward and ſpiritual Jews or Chriſtians? And is it not their duty to be waſhed or baptized inwardly with it? They are to be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire, Mat. iii. 11. Every diſciple ought to wait for, receive, and experience this baptiſm. They are to be waſhed with the Spirit of judgment and burning, and to have their corrupt blood purged away thereby, Iſa. iv. 4. They are inwardly to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, that they may inwardly riſe up in the newneſs of the life, and of that living name, Mat. xxviii. 19. They are to be baptized into the one body, which is the ſpiritual body; and by ſpiritual baptiſm is the ſoul baptized into it (and not by that which is carnal), and ſo to come to Mount Sion, and the heavenly Jeruſalem, and enter into it; which the uncircumciſed and unclean cannot enter into, but they alone that know the truth as it is in Jeſus, and keep it, Heb. xii. 22. Iſa. lii. 1. and chap. xxvi. 2.

Query 2. *If but one baptiſm commanded, and men cannot baptize one another with the Spirit, and it is ſinful to afflict one another, what baptiſm is this one baptiſm?*

Anſw. God made his apoſtles (and makes thoſe whom he makes miniſters in the goſpel) able miniſters of the New-Teſtament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. And if the Lord make them able miniſters in

his Spirit, what ſhould hinder them from miniſtering the ſpiritual baptiſm? The ſame Spirit that teacheth through them, is it not able to baptize through them? "Who is ſufficient for theſe things," ſaith the apoſtle, 2 Cor. ii. 16.? Were they ſufficient to teach, but as God taught through them? And are they not ſufficient to baptize, as God baptizeth through them? How often have we found our ſouls taught and baptized by the water of life flowing from the ſpring of life through the holy miniſtry, which God hath mercifully raiſed up, and maketh uſe of, in theſe our days?

Query 3. *Whether it be not the work of God on the inner man, that brings the outward man to be baptized, and obey the commands of God?*

Anſw. It was the work of God on the inner man, when John's baptiſm was commanded by God, to bring men to John's baptiſm; and it is the work of God's Spirit in the heart, which brings men to diſcern and ſubject to Chriſt's baptiſm; for the baptiſm of Chriſt is not diſcerned by man's wiſdom, or by the reaſoning mind, but by the ſenſe of life in the heart.

Query 4. *Whether men can be truly ſanctified by faith and the Spirit, that are diſobedient to God, and live ſo?*

Anſw. No, they cannot. But true obedience requires true light and true underſtanding; for all are not obedient who judge themſelves ſo, but thoſe whom God judgeth ſo. The inward Jew is obedient to the inward baptiſm, which Chriſt hath appointed, and dareth not ſet up John's outward in its place.

Query 5. *Whether the Spirit of God doth not diſtinguiſh between ſprinkling of the Spirit and baptiſm?*

Anſw. They are both figurative expreſſions; but they tend to, and end in, one and the ſame thing in ſubſtance, which is inward cleanſing. "Sprinkling "clean water upon the ſoul doth cleanſe it," Ezek. xxxvi. 25. And dipping into, or being overwhelmed with, the water of life, in the pourings out of the Spirit upon the ſoul, doth cleanſe alſo. For there is a river, the ſtreams whereof do not only refreſh, but alſo

alſo cleanſe and carry away ſin and filth from the ſoul, as with a flood.

I pray conſider that place, Iſa. xliv. 3, 4, 5. When God, from the fountain of life, pours out water and floods upon him that is a-thirſt, do not theſe floods and water waſh him and nouriſh him alſo? Do not they waſh away that which hinders his ſpringing up and growth in the truth? And is not he hereby baptized into the name of the Lord? God is the God of Jacob, the Holy One of Iſrael. And doth not one that is waſhed, feeling that carried away by the floods and overflowings of the Spirit, inwardly feel, and preſently ſay in his heart, "I am the Lord's? And "another ſurname himſelf by the name of Iſrael?" Now I am one of the ſeed of Jacob indeed, and of God's Iſrael, and that name belongs to me. I am inwardly waſhed from my former wicked and deceitful heart; that is gone, and a new heart and ſpirit of God's creating and forming is witneſſed by me, and God's Spirit teſtifies in me, and to me, "That I am "an Iſraelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

Query 6. *Whether the circumciſing knife be not the word of God, and the ſoul obeying of it be not a ſign the knife hath entered, and taken place on the ſoul of man?*

Anſw. It is true; the word of God, the quick, powerful, piercing word of life, the word which lives and abides for ever, and is a commandment of life in the heart, (Deut. xxx. 11, to 15. which is the commandment, law, or word of the new covenant, chap. xxix. 1. which is the word of faith, which the apoſtles preached, Rom. x. 8.) this word of God is the circumciſing knife, and the ſoul obeying of it cannot but be circumciſed by it.

But I am jealous with a godly jealouſy, leſt he miſtake and call ſomewhat elſe the word, and reckon his obedience to what he apprehends from the letter, to be obedience to the word; and if ſo he greatly deceives his own ſoul. And I have good reaſon thus to be jealous concerning him, becauſe I find him, in his anſwer to my firſt query, terming water-baptiſm

the "Law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt;" which cannot but be ſtrange language to all that know the nature, virtue, life, and power of the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus.

Query. 7. *Whether baptiſm doth not lead men into Chriſt, as obedience to the mind of God in Noah's time led him into the ark, that we may be ſaved by Chriſt, as Noah was by the ark?*

Anſw. It is the Father, by his drawings, that leads men to Chriſt, and Chriſt by his Spirit baptizeth them into himſelf. He conforms thoſe to himſelf that come to him, both in his death and reſurrection, by the Spirit and power of the Father.

Now it is this baptiſm, or the inward waſhing, which removeth that which deſtroys; and the ſoul that is ſubject to the miniſtration of Chriſt's Spirit, and gives up to be waſhed by him, is waſhed and made clean, and comes into the number of the ſaved; for feeling the power which ſaves, and experiencing the virtue and operation of it, he muſt needs be ſaved thereby.

Nor was it obedience in Noah's time which led him into the ark, but God's voice or ſpecial command to him, which he received in the faith ("By faith he "prepared the ark," Heb. xi. 7.), which faith produced obedience; ſo that it is faith in the mighty power of God which ſaves; which power works mightily in them that truly believe, mightily circumciſing, mightily baptizing, mightily burying with Chriſt, burying the ſoul into his death, and raiſing it up again in the newneſs of his life. So that here is a real inward work of faith, a real inward appearing and working of the power, and a real obedience to, and a going along with the power in its work, in the holy fear and trembling; and ſo the ſoul works out its ſalvation, by the power which works in it "both to "will and to do according to God's good pleaſure," Phil. ii. 12, 13. Eph. i. 19, 20.

Query 8. *Whether Chriſt was not buried in the water-baptiſm? We then being baptized, are we not buried with Chriſt by baptiſm?*

Anſw.

Anſw. Chriſt was circumciſed with Moſes's circumciſion, and was alſo baptized with John's baptiſm, which was a dipping into, or burying in, the water; yet notwithſtanding this, he hath his own ſpiritual circumciſion and ſpiritual baptiſm, to be adminiſtered in the goſpel-diſpenſation unto his. And as all Moſes's diſciples were to be circumciſed with his circumciſion, and all John's diſciples to be baptized with his baptiſm unto repentance, ſo all Chriſt's diſciples are to be inwardly circumciſed and baptized with his inward circumciſion and baptiſm, which is the ſubſtance of both the other figures.

Now thoſe only that are thus circumciſed, are circumciſed by Chriſt, and thoſe only that are thus baptized, are buried with him by baptiſm into his death; which muſt be, before they can truly know a riſing with him in his life. May not a man or woman eaſily, from an apprehenſion in their underſtanding, go into the outward water, and riſe up again out of the water, and yet not know what it is to die with Chriſt, or riſe with Chriſt? But he that knoweth the inward baptiſm, witneſſeth and experienceth theſe things, being made a partaker with Chriſt, both in his death and reſurrection.

Query 9. *Whether obedience to the law of God doth not give a ſoul a good conſcience in the ſight of God, and diſobedience make the conſcience guilty? And whether ever the ſoul can be clear of ſin, while living in diſobedience to the law of God?*

Anſw. It is God's ſprinkling the ſoul, whether with the water of his holy fountain, or with the blood of the covenant, and his waſhing them therewith, which makes the conſcience good, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Zech. xiii. 1. Heb. xii. 22. (Let it be conſidered ſeriouſly, whether outward water, or inward, be intended in that place? Heb. xii. 22. And when David ſaid, "He "waſhed his hands in innocency," Pſa. xxvi. 6. whether he did it with outward water)? This water, this blood, this ſprinkling, this waſhing, is received in obedience, and not in diſobedience. But what

obedience is it received in? Is it received in obedience to Moſes's circumciſion or John's baptiſm? Or in obedience to Chriſt's circumciſion and baptiſm? And let him, and all of his perſuaſion, ſeriouſly weigh, whether ever the ſoul can be clear of ſin, while living in ignorance of, or diſobedience to, Chriſt's circumciſion and baptiſm, whereby alone ſin can be cut off from the heart, and waſhed away from the conſcience?

Query 10. *Whether to obey God, be not the way to meet with God, and to be baptized of God?*

Anſw. "Obedience is better than ſacrifice, and to "hearken, than the fat of rams." And to obey Chriſt's Spirit in the goſpel-diſpenſation, being inwardly circumciſed and waſhed by him, is far better than to be circumciſed with Moſes's circumciſion, or baptized with John's baptiſm. The day is dawned, and the ſhadows are fled away, and the obedience is not now to the ſhadowy ordinances of Moſes, or John the Baptiſt, but to the light of the day, which ſhines in the hearts of the children of the new covenant. And they only have the true knowledge of Chriſt, and the true obedience, who know the ſhinings of this light, and walk with God in the ſhinings thereof, 2 Cor. iv. 6. 1 John i. 7.

Query 11. *Whether man can idolize God's ordinances, in keeping, doing, loving, and living up to them?*

Anſw. They that ſet up Moſes's circumciſion, or John's baptiſm for Chriſt's (which are not outward, as Moſes's and John's, but inward and ſpiritual), they idolize them, and are found guilty of ſo doing, in the ſight of him who judgeth righteouſly. Is it not idolizing the ſhadow or figure, to ſet it up in the place of the ſubſtance?

Query 12. *Whether mens calling the keeping, doing, loving, and pleading for God's ordinances, idolatry, be not ſome of thoſe hard ſpeeches Jude ſpeaks of?*" Jude 15.

Anſw. He ſtill all along takes the thing in queſtion for granted. We grant that Moſes's circumciſion was God's ordinance, and that John's baptiſm was God's ordinance;

ordinance; but that either of theſe is a goſpel-ordinance, that Moſes's circumciſion is the circumciſion of Chriſt, or John's water-baptiſm is the baptiſm of Chriſt, that we conſcientiouſly and groundedly deny; God's Spirit in the ſcriptures putting a difference between them, as particularly between John's baptiſm and Chriſt's, Mat. iii. 11. So that as he greatly miſtakes the thing, ſo (through his miſtake) he lamentably wreſts and miſapplies that ſcripture, Jude 15. And let him ſeriouſly conſider whether that ſcripture may not juſtly be applied to them? And whether they can poſſibly avoid the laſh of it without repentance, who deny and revile the inward appearance of Chriſt, by the light of his Spirit, in the hearts of his in this our day, and deny his inward circumciſion and baptiſm to be the goſpel-ordinance of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſetting up John's water-baptiſm in the ſtead thereof.

The laſt Query, *Whether it be not invading, and labouring to make void God's law and commands, when men ſo ſlight, contemn, deſpiſe, write, and do all they can to keep people from cloſing in with them, and make them afraid of them by their writing and preaching, as ſome do?*

Anſw. This Query implies a very deep wrong charge againſt the children and ſervants of God, for their obedience to God's Spirit. Oh! how will he anſwer this to God! Becauſe we own Chriſt's baptiſm, with the Holy Ghoſt and fire, and into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, with the water of the fountain which God opens for ſin and for uncleanneſs, and give teſtimony thereto in the requirings of God's Spirit, having learnt it of him, and experienced it from him, and having a neceſſity upon us in his name and authority (many times) to teſtify, That this is the goſpel-baptiſm of Chriſt our Lord, and that John's water-baptiſm is not the goſpel-baptiſm, but only a figure, repreſentation, or ſhadow thereof; therefore this man chargeth us with *invading, and labouring to make void God's law and commands, with ſlighting, contemning, deſpiſing*, &c. Are not theſe hard

hard words, and a very unjuſt accuſation againſt God's choſen meſſengers and ſervants, and any whom he pleaſeth to make uſe of in this teſtimony? But the truth is, theſe hard words are not ſo much againſt us, as againſt him that ſends us with this teſtimony, and is no leſs than a fighting againſt him, who will be too hard for you all, and will gather people more and more from the outward water-baptiſm of John, to the inward baptiſm by his holy Spirit and fire, which happy are they that know and are baptized with.

He ſaith at the cloſe, *I have no end in this, but God's glory.*

Anſw. But he greatly miſtakes the way to glorify God; for to ſet up the ſhadow of a thing, inſtead of the thing itſelf, is not the way to glorify Chriſt, or the goſpel-diſpenſation. For Chriſt is the Son, who doth not come forth with Moſes's circumciſion, or John's baptiſm (who were both ſervants), but with the Spirit and power of his Father, wherewith he circumciſeth and baptizeth inwardly and ſpiritually. And to ſet up that which is outward in the ſtead of this, is both to diſhonour the Father and the Son.

THE

CONCLUSION.

NOW, for a cloſe, I ſhall open a little of the myſtery of CHRIST, and of his enlightening, quickening, circumciſing, and baptizing, from ſome ſcriptures, as the Lord hath pleaſed to open them in me, and to me, and give me the inward ſenſe and experience of them.

John i. 1. and 3. "The word was in the beginning, "which created all things;" and this word is alſo the begin-

beginning of the creation of God in the heart. " In " this word was life, and the life was the light of " men; and this light, which is life in the word, " ſhines in mens darkneſs," which enlighteneth them that believe in it, and the life thereof quickeneth and giveth life to them that hear its voice, and believe in it; and both the light and life, or the word by its light and life, circumciſeth and baptizeth. Doth not the pure light cut off, chaſe away, waſh away darkneſs (wherein all ſin and uncleanneſs is comprehended) from the heart? Doth not the pure word of life, received in the faith, purify the heart?

Queſt. *But where is this word? Or how ſhall a man come at this word, or hear its voice or commandment, in the obedience whereof he is enlightened, quickened, circumciſed, and baptized?*

Anſ. It is not far off; " It is nigh thee, ſaith Moſes, " Thou needeſt not go up to heaven for it, or down " to the deep," &c. For God, in his love to man, hath placed it nigher, even in man's mouth and heart, that he might hear it and do it, Deut. xxx. and Rom. x. And he that inclines his ear to this word, hears and obeys it, lives. And as it is the word of the new covenant (in which is the light and life of the new covenant), ſo it brings him into the new covenant, or makes an everlaſting covenant with him, even the ſure mercies of David, Iſa. lv. 3.

Another ſcripture is, 1 John i. 1. where he ſpeaks of the ſame word, of the ſame life, and of the ſame light, wherewith men are enlightened, and wherein they are to walk, ver. 7. That which is declared of, that which is to be teſtified of by the goſpel-miniſters, is the word, the life, the light. This is the meſſage Chriſt gave his apoſtles to preach, " That God is " light," ver. 5. What is the intent of this meſſage, but " that men might be turned from darkneſs to " this light," Acts xxvi. 18. And then the light enlightens them, and they ſoon come to feel life, and the word from which the life comes. And ſo they that truly receive the teſtimony of the light (which is the

the goſpel-meſſage, ver. 5.) they ſoon come to the manifeſtation of the life (or of him who is the life) in their own hearts, and ſo into fellowſhip with them that are in the light, and with the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt alſo.

A third ſcripture is, 2 Cor. iv. 6. which ſhews the way of enlightening the mind, which is by God's cauſing the light of life to ſhine in the heart; which being believed in, gives the *knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.* God is a Spirit; the knowledge of him is ſpiritual, given and received in the ſhinings of his light in the heart.

Thus we receive the beginnings of our ſpiritual knowledge, and thus we receive the increaſe thereof day by day. In his light (in the ſhinings of his light in our hearts) we ſee light at firſt, and in the further ſhinings thereof we ſee more and more light.

The laſt place I ſhall mention, is Matt. xiii. 31. The kingdom of God was that which Chriſt much preached, and here he preacheth it as a "ſeed ſown "in the heart," and that a very little one. Now conſider if this be not the word of God in a ſeed, Chriſt in a ſeed, life in a ſeed, light in a ſeed, God's ſeed, ("his ſeed remaineth in him," 1 John iii. 9.) Now this ſeed, as it grows in the heart, grows in its own life, light, nature, Spirit, power, &c. and puts all theſe forth in the heart in which it grows, againſt ſin, and towards righteouſneſs. Yea, the judgment of God is revealed in the ſpiritual light, life, and power of this word againſt ſin, and for righteouſneſs; and God's Sion, God's inward, ſpiritual Sion (or his people and children) is redeemed by the judgment and righteouſneſs which is revealed from and in this word in the heart. And this word is ſo powerful againſt ſin, that it doth not only cut it off, and waſh it away from the mind and conſcience, and ſo make them clean, but it alſo keeps the mind, in which it remains (as it is regarded and hearkened to), from joining to ſin any more; and if ſin cannot be joined to, it can neither be-

be conceived nor brought forth, 1 John iii. 9. James iii. 15.

Object. *But by this doctrine, or experience (as thou calleſt it), Chriſt in his outward appearance, his ſacrifice and blood, as alſo the ſcriptures, with the exhortations and commands thereof, are all laid waſte, and made void, and of no uſe or effect, all being attributed to this word, life, and light within.*

Anſ. No, in no-wiſe. This word within, with the life and light thereof, doth not make void any former appearance or miniſtration of God, but rather eſtabliſhes them, by owning them in their proper place, uſe, and ſervice. For he that truly owns this word, light, life, Spirit, power, &c. in his own heart, muſt alſo own it in the hearts of others, in Moſes, in the prophets, in John, and in its fulneſs in Chriſt in the fleſh; and the virtue of all it did in Chriſt, and by Chriſt in the fleſh, towards the ſalvation of mankind, which his obedience, and the ſhedding of his blood, was by the Father made abſolutely requiſite unto. And the ſcriptures, the inſtructions, reproofs, exhortations, commands thereof, &c. in the hand of the Spirit, are very uſeful to this day; and the ſhinings of Chriſt, and the quickenings of his life, are felt in them, when the Lord manageth them unto the ſoul for good. Yea, the words that Chriſt ſpoke in the days of his fleſh, are Spirit and life to this day, when he ſpeaks them in the heart. But they are not life, as men apprehend, underſtand, or ſpeak them of themſelves, but rather death, as ſo made uſe of.

And thoſe that thus only learn the words, or practiſe the words, they do not learn aright, or practiſe aright; they do not know Chriſt aright, they do not believe aright, or repent aright; they cannot know Chriſt as he is the word of life in the heart, nor hear him, nor obey him, nor be circumciſed or baptized by him; but are drowned in literal apprehenſions and conceptions of their own, beneath him who is the life.

Thus the Jews, in their day, waited for the Meſſiah, and ſpake great things of the kingdom of the Meſſiah, but

but knew neither him nor his kingdom, when he appeared and preached it. So likewiſe, many now ſpeak great things of Chriſt being come, and of his obedience, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, &c. and yet know not him, his voice, his appearance in their own hearts, or in the hearts of others; but think in their obedience to what they apprehend from the ſcriptures to have eternal life, whilſt ſtrangers to the living principle of truth, whereby he gives eternal life to his ſheep "that hear his voice, and follow the Lamb of "God whereſoever he goes," and leads along his ſheep with him, John x. 27, 28.

He that would know God and Chriſt to ſalvation, muſt know them in that myſtery of light and life, wherein and whereby they ſave and deliver from the myſtery of ſin and death; for there is the myſtery of God, the myſtery of the Father, the myſtery of Chriſt, the myſtery of the goſpel, the revelation of the myſtery, the preaching of the myſtery, the myſtery of the kingdom of God, the ſpeaking the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, the riches of the glory of the myſtery, the acknowledgment of the myſtery, the fellowſhip of the myſtery, and the myſtery of the faith held in a pure conſcience. The true miniſters of Chriſt are ſtewards of the myſteries of God. They have the treaſure of life in their earthen veſſels, and are to give forth from that treaſure to thoſe they miniſter to, and bring them to the diſcerning and partaking of the ſame treaſure in themſelves.

Oh! conſider! conſider! all ye profeſſors of Chriſt, and of the Chriſtian religion! There is a myſterious power that begets, a myſterious womb that conceives and brings forth, a myſterious birth that is begotten and brought forth, which hungers after the myſtery, and is fed with the knowledge, life, and virtue of the myſtery. That birth which is of a nature below this, or feeds on a knowledge below this, and hath a faith and hope beneath the nature of the faith and hope which God gives to this birth, is but the child or birth of the bond-woman, which is not to inherit with Iſaac

the

the true heir; but all ſuch kind of children of the kingdom muſt be caſt out, with the bond-woman their mother, Mat. viii. 22. Gal. iv. 30.

The birth of the Father's Spirit and power, is only the true inward Jew or Chriſtian, to which the promiſes, the kingdom, and everlaſting ſalvation belongs; and all elſe are but pretenders to be what they are not; who after all the fires of their own kindling, and ſparks wherewith they compaſs themſelves about, will at laſt lie down in ſorrow from the hand of the Lord. Oh! that none might be deceived by the enemy of their ſoul, about matters of ſo great concern!

Eighteenth of the
5th month, 1679.

I. P.

EPISTLES to FRIENDS.

EPISTLE I.

To FRIENDS in and about the Two Chalfonts.

DEAR FRIENDS,

YE have a deep place in my heart, and my cries are to the Lord for you, that ye may live to him, and find his life ſpringing up and abounding in you. What is it to have a diſtinct name, or diſtinct meetings from the world, unleſs the power of the Lord be felt in your hearts, and his preſence in your aſſemblies? Oh! that the Lord would awaken you! Oh! that the Lord would quicken you! Oh! that it would pleaſe the Lord to raiſe up a ſtrict watch in you, againſt all drowſineſs, and careleſſneſs, and temptations, and ſnares of the enemy, that ye may travel on your journey, with your backs upon the world, and your faces towards Sion; never looking back to the fleſhly nature, deſires, or luſts, to entertain any thing of that any more, which ye have parted with in the demonſtrations and leadings of life, but ſtill preſſing on further and further, till ye come to apprehend and be poſſeſſed of that, for which ye have been apprehended by God, and drawn in ſome meaſure towards.

O my friends! There is a path of life in which ye muſt travel, even to the very end of it, or the crown of life is not to be received! Oh! that ye might travel on! Oh! that nothing might ſtop you! Oh! that ye might every day wait for and feel the leader, and walk on with him in the ſimplicity, uprightneſs, and

ſenſe

ſenſe of his life, out of the reach of that wiſdom, which is ever and anon forming reaſonings in the heart againſt it, and ſtriving to darken, and make the plain way of God intricate to the ſoul!

My life often reacheth to you, my ſoul exceedingly longeth after you! And in the ſtirrings of the ſame life be ye alſo helpful to me, crying to the Lord for me, that I may abide with him, feel his preſervation, and dwell in that which he hath choſen to appear to and refreſh the ſoul in, that I may be acceptable to him, and further helpful to you, in the ſeaſon of the ſtirrings of his precious and powerful life in my heart. The Lord God of mercy watch over you, pruning and keeping down all the earthlineſs and corruption in any of you, and watering and cheriſhing his own plant in you all, that ye may daily witneſs the dying and decreaſe of the one, and the quickening and growth of the other, even till death be perfectly conſumed and ſwallowed up by the growth, power, and preſence of the immortal life in you, and your ſouls ſafe and happy in your God.

And ſo to the tender mercies and care of the Lord do I give you all up, breathing for you (as for my own ſoul) that ye may be perfectly the Lord's, perfectly given unto him, perfectly waiting upon him, and daily receiving into your precious veſſels the precious living teſtimonies of his love and acceptance, and his ſweet heavenly dews, which will exceedingly refreſh and make your hearts glad, as he cauſeth them to deſcend and light upon you. So that which is of God in your hearts every day, wait to feel God breathing upon, that it may open unto him, receive ſtrength from him, and ye in it be more and more gathered and united to the Lord, even till ye wholly become one nature, mind, and ſpirit with him; and then ye will ſee the end of your travels, and ſit down in his joy, and peace, and pure reſt, from all labouring after life, and all ſorrows for the want and abſence of it, and all fears of loſing or being ſeparated from it; being eſtabliſhed in the power which is over all, and

which preſerveth all that are encompaſſed with it, and eſtabliſhed in it, for ever and ever.

Your friend and brother, in the meek innocent nature of the Lamb, and in the begetting of the royal heavenly life,

I. P.

From my preſent place of confinement in Ayleſbury, according to the will of God; who is bleſſed, and to be bleſſed in all that he doth, or ſuffereth to be done: 22d of the third month, 1666.

Oh! my friends! prize the rich tender mercy of the Lord, in calling you out of this world, towards his everlaſting inheritance and fulneſs of life! And let not any thing of this world come between him and you; but let all that is of this worldly nature, both within and without, be trampled upon by you, and the price of the high calling of our God in Chriſt Jeſus, be faithfully and earneſtly purſued after; that none fall ſhort of the hope and glory ſet before him, but that every one may ſo run, as certainly to obtain and enjoy for ever, even the dominion and reign of God over all that is contrary to him, and the ſitting down in the reſt, joy, and peace of his nature for evermore. Amen.

EPISTLE II.

To Friends in Truth, in and about the Two Chalfonts.

OH! let every ſoul wait to feel the pure life of God, that in that we may wreſtle with our tender Father, for the opening the depth of his bowels and tender mercy, that that may be brought forth in every veſſel, and in the whole body, which may make the

the glory of his name ſhine, and may fill the veſſels of his choice with the joy and pleaſure of his ſalvation! Oh! that the pure meaſure of his life might be awakened and raiſed in your aſſemblies together, that ye might feel the pure fountain, the ſprings opening in you, the ſtreams running through you, and every ſoul refreſhed, filled, and ſatisfied; that ye might go away bleſſing his name, who hath taught you and given you hearts to wait upon him, and who ſheweth you mercy, and giveth you acceptance in your waitings!

And, dear friends! watch, that life may be always freſh and ſavoury in you, to the ſeaſoning of all your thoughts, words, converſations, and actions, that ye may feel the name of God written upon you, and his precious preſence in you, and with you.

And in this freſhneſs remember me, to whom the Lord hath given to remember and breathe for you, who am a priſoner, and have ſuffered many afflictions, becauſe that of God which is in me cannot bow to that which is of man.

I. P.

From Ayleſbury priſon, the 23d of the Sixth month, 1666.

EPISTLE III.

To diligent and faithful Friends, in and about the Two Chalfonts.

O tender and dearly-beloved friends,

MY ſpirit is at this time touched with the ſenſe of the great goodneſs and mercy of the Lord, inſomuch as I feel breakings forth therein, and repeating there over and over again, Oh! what hath the Lord done for us, what hath the Lord done for us? For he hath not only given us a ſenſe and taſte of the precious promiſes in the ſcripture, but hath alſo led

us in the way of the fulfilling of them. He hath manifeſted that to us, wherein not only the promiſe is made, but whereto alſo the promiſe is fulfilled. Which of you, that is open and freſh, doth not know the ſeed of life, the living principle, the light eternal, which leads out of death and darkneſs, into the land of the living, the holy land, wherein dwells peace and righteouſneſs, the land which flows with milk and honey, wherein are the vineyards which ye planted not, and the houſes that ye built not, wherein the true vine grows, and its branches ſhoot forth and bear the right grapes? Oh! my friends, do ye not know the Father which begat you, and the Son in whoſe image he hath begotten you, and his Spirit, which is the breath, ſtrength, and power of your life? How hath the Lord God advanced you, a poor, afflicted, deſpiſed, perſecuted remnant, above all kindreds, families, and profeſſions of the earth? How nigh is the Lord your God unto you? Doth he not tabernacle and dwell in you? Do ye not feel him walking up and down, and taking delight in your ſpirits, who are ſeparated from the unclean thing, and to whom ſubjection to him is become pleaſant and natural? Oh! the Lord God give his people a ſenſe what he is unto them in this day, and lead them along into their ſeveral poſſeſſions and inheritances, that they may ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, each in his portion in the holy land, and in the heavenly dwelling-places in Chriſt Jeſus, which the ſouls of thoſe that are redeemed by him are acquainted with and ſit in.

It is on my heart to inſtance in ſome things a little more particularly, that the ſenſe and remembrance of God's goodneſs to you herein, may come the nearer and cloſer to your ſpirits.

Firſt, Have ye not had experience of the Lord's love and faithfulneſs in manifeſting his name unto you, which ye have in ſome meaſure known, as pure, precious, and excellent, as a ſtrong tower in caſe of danger and aſſaults from the enemy? And hath not the Lord taught you, by a ſecret inſtinct of his Spirit and life

life in you, to retire and hide yourſelves in this tower, from the violence and fury of the enemy? And have ye not always found relief, ſafety, and protection therein? Indeed, when ye have gone out into your own thoughts, and conſulted with the reaſons of the fleſhly mind, there ye have met with a wound and a hurt, and have lain open to the ſtroke of the betrayer and devourer; but the name of the Lord hath never deceived or diſappointed any of you that have truſted in it, relying upon his kindneſs, tenderneſs, mercy, love and faithfulneſs therein.

Secondly, Hath not the Lord given you a proportion of the pure heavenly patience, even of the Lamb's meekneſs and patience, and alſo given you to poſſeſs your ſouls therein, wherein hath been felt a true meaſure of reſt and peace with him, in the midſt of all the diſturbances, fears, and troubles, both within and without? And hath not this been an help and ſuccour to you, even in the time of his judgments, wherein ye have been enabled to wait and lie ſtill, until the indignation was over-paſt, and the mercy ſprang afreſh?

Thirdly, Hath not God manifeſted to you the place of his worſhip, even ſo that ye know, and have often experienced it to be in his name, Spirit, truth, and power? And hath he not prepared for you, and given to you, the pure offering and ſacrifice, and accepted it at your hands? And have ye not often, yea, may I not ſay always, felt his preſence meeting there, and the refreſhments which come from his preſence in this day of his mercy, and of his tender viſiting and refreſhing his ſeed?

Fourthly, Have ye not felt the word of his power ſhaking the mountains, breaking the rocks, and making the dark hard part in you, and the enemy of your ſouls, to tremble at the ſound of his voice? Yea, have ye not found thereby the ſtony heart in a great meaſure taken out of you, and a tender heart, an heart like fleſh, given you inſtead thereof, which hath melted

and bowed before the Lord, and tenderly received the impreſſions of his Spirit?

Fifthly, Have ye not found the laws of life, the laws of the new covenant written by the finger of God's Spirit in this new heart, ſo that ye could read the will and requiring of your God, by the light of his Spirit in the inner man?

Sixthly, Hath not he alſo put his Spirit within you, that ye have not only read the law written, but have alſo found a delight (and ability alſo in him) to do his will? For the Lord hath not left you to do what he requires, according to the old covenant, but he himſelf worketh in you both to will and to do what is acceptable to him of his own good pleaſure.

Seventhly, Have ye not found his fear put into your hearts, even a fear which no precepts of men can teach, nor ye can by no means attain to, but as he pleaſeth to give it you? And doth not this fear make you wiſe in him to depart from evil? Doth it not cleanſe out the evil? Doth it not keep out the evil? Did ye not find this virtue in it at the very firſt, and do ye not ſtill find it to this very day?

Eighthly, Do ye not find the blotting out of iniquity, and the not remembering of your ſins by the Lord? Ah! how hath the Lord forgiven you? How doth the Lord pity you? How doth he bear with you? Do ye not know the place and ſtate wherein mercy pleaſeth him, and where he is never weary of pardoning, blotting out, and forgiving? Do ye not feel the ſprinkling of the blood of the covenant daily by him upon your conſciences, and the precious virtue thereof?

Ninthly, Do ye not find the anointing near you, yea within you, ready to teach you to know the Lord, ſo that ye indeed know him, not according to outward names and apprehenſions only, but his nature in his heavenly power, in his inward virtue, manifeſtations, operations, and appearances in you? And this is true knowledge indeed, pure knowledge, freſh knowledge, living knowledge, which makes you conformable to, and

and brings you forth in, the image and likeneſs of what ye know.

Tenthly, Is not the way of the ranſomed, the way of holineſs, become clear and pleaſant to you? Hath not the Lord removed many ſtumbling-blocks, that he might make the way plain? And is it not a path wherein there is no erring, wherein a way-farer may walk without fear or danger, the light is ſo certain, the guide ſo faithful, and the path ſo eaſy and infallible to the plain, honeſt, ſingle, upright heart, who freely giveth up to the Lord, and waiteth to be taught and led by him? Indeed to the wiſe, reaſoning, diſputing mind it is not thus, nor to you at any time when that part is up; but as that is brought down, and the ſimplicity of Chriſt (the innocent birth) raiſed in you, do ye not ſtill feel it thus? Therefore ye had need to watch, and pray, and wait, and believe, that ye may know and enjoy the precioufneſs of your ſpiritual eſtates and conditions in the Lord, and that that which would corrupt and deſtroy, may (by the lifting up and diſplaying of the banner of his love and power in you) be beat down and kept out.

Eleventhly, Hath not God given you of the true humility, whereby that which was once exalted in you above his fear and above his ſeed, is now brought down and laid low, and his pure life and fear in you exalted over it? Do ye not know the feigned humility and fear (which man's wiſdom teacheth, and man's wiſdom learneth), and abhor them? And is not the true fear and humility which ye have received from God, very precious, and of great uſe and ſervice to you?

Twelfthly, Have ye not received the true love, whereby ye are taught and enabled to love the Lord your God above all, and the brethren, children, and fathers in him; yea, and your very enemies alſo. How precious is this! Who can witneſs this, but he who hath received it! but he whoſe heart the Lord hath circumciſed, and from which he hath cut off the enmity and contentious nature, which cannot truly love neither

the Lord nor his people, nor his creatures, though it maketh a ſubtil deceitful ſhew thereof, to the deluding both of itſelf and others.

Thirteenthly, Do ye not know the true righteouſneſs, and the true ſanctification which is in Chriſt Jeſus, and which ye receive and abide in him, which formerly (in a great meaſure) ye did but talk of, and which many to this day (whom the Lord hath not gathered, as he hath done you, but hath left behind, out of the power, out of the calling, out of the election) have only the words of, and their own apprehenſions upon the words, but know not, nor feel, nor enjoy the thing itſelf, as ye do this day, bleſſed be the name of your merciful God and Redeemer.

Fourteenthly, Do ye not know Sion, the holy hill of God, and Jeruſalem the holy city which is built thereon, which hath long been hid, even from ages and generations, but now is made manifeſt in the Spirit, and many are already come thither, and many more are travelling thither-wards, and ſome dwell and abide therein, and feel the law going forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem, and find their ſouls tranſlated by the mighty power of God from death, and hell, and enmity, into the nature, love, and life of the Lamb; in whoſe light thoſe that are ſaved and redeemed by him, walk?

Fifteenthly, Do ye not know the true church and body of Chriſt, which is one ſpirit with him, which is fleſh of his fleſh, and bone of his bones? And hath not the Lord in his mercy made you members thereof? And do ye not feel the nouriſhment, virtue, life, and Spirit of the whole body in your own veſſels, and ſo are partakers of the true union and fellowſhip, both with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and one with another? For he that is gathered by, and walks in the true light, is alſo in the true life and fellowſhip, both with that which begets, and with that which is begotten.

Sixteenthly, Do ye not know the kingdom and reign of Chriſt already in meaſure ſet up, and daily more and more ſetting up in your hearts? And is not his government

ment ſweet, pure, heavenly, precious, refreſhing to that which is of God in you, and an iron hammer and ſceptre to that which is earthly and fleſhly. And is it not your joy to feel him reign and overcome his enemies, exalting his holy name, power, and ſceptre over them? And what he hath done, and what he is doing, and what he will yet do in you, of his own tender love, and for his own name's ſake; do not your hearts leap within you, when at any time the Lord pleaſeth to give you the ſenſe and ſight thereof?

Seventeenthly, Do ye not know the faſt which the Lord hath choſen, and hath not the Lord helped you to keep that faſt? Have ye not felt his power break the bond of iniquity in you, and the once oppreſſed in you coming up in a true meaſure of the pure freedom, to ſerve and worſhip the Lord? And have ye not alſo had a taſte of the feaſt which the Lord hath prepared on his holy mountain, even of the fat things, and wines on the lees well refined, which they that inhabit there eat and drink of abundantly in his preſence?

Eighteenthly, Do ye not feel God the Lord making an everlaſting covenant with you, even of the love and mercies ſure to David and his ſeed for evermore? Is not he near you, yea with you and in you, who is the gatherer into, and the preſerver in, this covenant? Yea, do not ye feel him teaching and enabling you to keep covenant with the Lord your God, (by the virtue, power, and preſence of his life and Spirit in you) even as he keepeth covenant with you? Inſomuch as ye begin to feel a ſettlement and eſtabliſhment in him that is true, and your calling and election becoming ſure, and the danger and fear of falling away or miſcarrying, removing from off your ſpirits?

What ſhall I ſay to you, what ſhall I mention further, or what ſhall I inſtance in? Have ye not felt the wilderneſs become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field become a foreſt? Have ye not felt the lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind ſee, the dumb ſpeak, the leper cleanſed, the dead raiſed, &c.? Have ye not witneſſed

neſſed the ſore ſhaking, and terrible paſſing away (in meaſure) of the old heavens and old earth, and the forming, planting, and bringing in (in meaſure) of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwells righteouſneſs, in the ſtead thereof? So that in places where dragons lay, is now green graſs, with ſweet-ſmelling flowers; and in the once parched, dead, dry, barren, deſolate heaths, are now ſprings and flowings of the pure living water?

Friends; There is one, whom the Father hath ſealed, (and he is but one, yea, the very ſame in us all), in whom are all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, and all the riches and ſubſtance of life; and we, through the mercy and goodneſs of the Lord, partake thereof, as we are gathered into him, found in him, and abide in him.

And now my friends; What hath differenced us from others, or why hath the Lord done this for us more than for others? Search your hearts, ſee if any of you can find the cauſe thereof in yourſelves. Indeed I cannot. From my very heart I cannot but cry grace, grace! mercy, mercy! love, love (deep, tender love)! goodneſs, goodneſs! from the very firſt beginning, all along, throughout the whole carrying on of the work, to this day; and I have nothing elſe to hope in, or plead before my God. Do I believe? It is he gave me faith; yea, he putteth it forth, and cauſeth it to act in me, or I eaſily fail therein. Do I will that which is good in any kind? My will is of him, yea, it is in him, and hath its creation, preſervation, being, and ſtrength from him. Do I obey or do that which is good? No, no, not I; but his life, power, and Spirit in me. Do I ſuffer inwardly or outwardly? That is not of me neither, but he that hath given me to believe, he alſo giveth me to ſuffer, and beareth up my ſpirit in my ſufferings, by his power, and for his name's ſake. So that my heart ſaith, (and I confidently believe he will, in his mercy and goodneſs, preſerve me in that ſenſe for ever) Not unto me, not unto me, in any one reſpect, but to thy name,

to

to thy holy name, to thy tender name, to thy infinite bowels, and precious love and compaſſions in every reſpect, be the acknowledgment and praiſe given of what thou haſt done, and yet doſt, and wilt do in and for my ſoul, for ever and ever.

And now, my dear friends; As the Lord hath demonſtrated the way of life unto you, ſo that it is ſealed in your ſpirits, and ye have walked in it, and always met with, not only the promiſes of life, but even life itſelf therein; ſo the Lord ſtill watch over you, that nothing ever blind that eye in you, which alone can ſee this way; and the Lord preſerve you in uprightneſs of heart, that ye may ſingly wait on him, for his farther manifeſting of it in you and to you; and that he, by his living Spirit, would continually quicken and rouſe up your ſpirits, to walk diligently and faithfully therein; that ſo ye may come to ſee what ye have not ſeen, and to deſire what ye have not deſired, and may find your hearts and inheritances enlarged in the Lord. Ah! what is the world, or any worldly thing or intereſt, in compariſon of this! The Lord remove every ſnare and every ſtumbling-block out of your way, and every weight and burthen from off your ſpirits, that ye may run with joyfulneſs to the end of your courſe, and may enter into the full kingdom and poſſeſſion of life. Ye have received already that which is all; but ye muſt wait for the farther opening and ſpreading of it in you, and your farther growth into it. The Lord's ſoul hath travailed for you, and his faithful meſſengers have likewiſe travailed and ſought after your ſouls, and your ſouls have travailed, and mourned, and waited, and gone through temptations and trials of many kinds, and had a taſte of the true peace, the true holineſs, the true righteouſneſs, the true joy, even the joy of the everlaſting kingdom. Now the Lord God preſerve you, that nothing may interrupt or come between you and that, wherein ye have felt him, and wherein is his riches and fulneſs; but that ye may always feel that, and abide

abide faithful to the Lord in that, wherein the preſervation and growth unto life eternal alone is witneſſed.

And friends; Put the Lord in mind, that as he hath pleaſed to manifeſt the way, and ſhew that clearly unto you, whereby the heart is joined to him and preſerved in him; ſo he would pleaſe, of his free and tender mercy, to add this alſo, even to give upright hearts, and entire ſpirits, to abide with him in that principle of life wherein he hath gathered you, and to watch unto, and be faithful to, all his warnings, drawings, movings, and leadings, that his Spirit may have no matter of grief againſt you, but it may be the delight of his ſoul to do you good continually, and to anſwer the deſire of your ſouls in every thing that ye breathe unto him for; that the Lord may not be aſhamed to own you to be his people, and ye may feel with joy, and abundant conſolation, that he is your God. And this will be enough in all the tribulations, afflictions, and trials that ye meet with, either inwardly or outwardly. So the God of love and peace preſerve you, in that wherein is fellowſhip with him, and in which his life, love, joy, and peace naturally and delightfully ſpring up and flow into the ſoul. Amen, Amen.

I. P.

Written in Ayleſbury gaol, about the Ninth and Tenth of the Twelfth month, 1666.

EPISTLE IV.

For Friends of our MEETING, and thereabouts.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I AM deeply ſenſible that it is a day of trouble, rebuke, and diſtreſs, to the Iſrael of God. The Lord hath pitched his pure, living tent, and begun to build up his beloved city; the Lord hath indeed had mercy upon Sion, and favoured the ruins and deſolations

ſolations thereof. But the malice and rage of the enemy is great, who ſeeketh to compaſs the tent of the holy and the beloved city, that he may lay waſte and deſtroy the work and heritage of God. Now all that feel life, all that are of the true birth, all that know the ſeed; oh! abide, live, and breathe in the ſeed, that ye may come forth in the true life, and in the ſtrength of God's holy Spirit, (with ſtrong cries and tears, with innocency and righteouſneſs, with meekneſs and patience, &c.) to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty. We have no ſtrength but our God, nor is our expectation from man (whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, who is to be ceaſed from); but we believe the voice, that not by ſtrength, nor by man's power, but by my Spirit, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, ſhall this work of his be preſerved and go on. Therefore every one wait to feel the ſeed travail and cry daily to the Father, that ſo the ſpirit of darkneſs may be hindered, and by the power of life withſtood, in all its enterprizes againſt the children of light. Oh! let the condition of Jeruſalem be written upon every one's heart; and as members of the living body, feel the wants, afflictions, and diſtreſſes of your fellow-members day by day. And let every one ſay in ſpirit;

Lord, take care of all thy children. Oh! thou tender Father, conſider what they ſuffer for the teſtimony of thy truth, and for thy name's ſake, and uphold them, and give them victory and an holy dominion over all, becauſe it belongs to thy ſeed into which thou haſt gathered them, and in which thou haſt united them to thyſelf. Oh! carry on thy glorious work, which thy own mighty arm hath begun, and cut it ſhort in righteouſneſs for thine elect's ſake, that it may be finiſhed by thee, to thine own everlaſting praiſe. Thy children wait on thee, they cry to thee day and night, that they may be preſerved by thee in the well-doing, and in the pure, holy, innocent ſufferings for thy truth's ſake; until thou ſay, It is enough, until thy holy Spirit ſay, It is finiſhed: my lambs, ye ſhall ſuffer no more, but now ye ſhall reign with me and my Son for ever.

My

My dear friends, it is now the time of prayer, and of waiting upon, and hoping in, the Lord, who knoweth and conſidereth all our conditions. If any be afflicted, let him pray. We are afflicted, we are oppreſſed without cauſe or provocation on our parts, only becauſe we fear, and love, and obey our God, according as he hath taught us, and becauſe he hath put this reſolution into our hearts, that we will abide in ſubjection to him, and ſtand to the holy teſtimony which he hath given us to bear, whatever befalls us. And what ſhall ſeparate us from his love, or come between us and his care over us, who is able to bear us up in all, and carry us over all (in the holy dominion and ſtrength of his ſeed) that can ſet upon us, and ſtrive to turn us out of the way, or make us faint in the way?

Dear friends, In my bonds I remember you, and pray for your proſperity. Do ye alſo remember me in your daily addreſſes and approaches to God, that I may receive increaſe of virtue and ſtrength from the Lord, by the help of your prayers; and, oh! feel the afflictions of the afflicted, and breathe for them day by day, that the whole body may receive the flowings in of life, help, and ſtrength daily, from the pure breathings of life in every member of the body every day.

So the God of love and mercies be with, and do good to, his whole heritage; and fill you (with the reſt of his children) from the pure fountain of life, with freſh ſtreams of life day by day, Amen. This is the hearty deſire of

Your friend, brother, and companion in the faith and patience of the ſaints, who have had a ſhare in the afflictions which befall his children and choſen ones, for his name's ſake,

Reading gaol, the 9th of the Sixth month, 1670.

I. P.

And

And truly friends, it is not grievous, but rather joy to me, to undergo the ſeveral afflictions and temptations, which my tender Father, in his tender love and good-will, orders for me. Yea, all that can taſte, tell me, is it not greater riches, and far ſweeter, in this our day, to bear the reproach of Chriſt, and to ſuffer for the teſtimony of his precious truth, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin and glory of this world, which are but for a ſeaſon?

EPISTLE V.

To Friends in Truth, in Chalfont, and thereabouts.

Dear friends, (whom I love in the Lord, and whoſe proſperity and growth in the truth I greatly deſire) this ſenſe is on my heart to you at this time.

THE Lord's ſoul travaileth for you, (having viſited you in tender mercy, and with great loving-kindneſs) and he deſireth to enjoy and poſſeſs you, as an inheritance for himſelf, to delight in and to do good unto continually; and I know there are many among you, who have alſo deſired and travailed after the Lord, and have been burthened and grieved with that which hath in any meaſure hindered your ſoul's enjoying the Lord, and your faithful ſerving him, and his delight and pleaſure in you. Now friends, this is my preſent deſire and breathing for you, even that ye may be joined further and cloſer in the everlaſting covenant of life and peace with the Lord, which muſt never be forgotten on your parts, as it cannot be on his; wherein to help all the tender and faithful-hearted among you, this advice ſprang in my heart to you this morning.

Mind

Mind and watch to that which quickens and enlivens the ſoul towards God, and watch againſt that which flats and deadens it; for they are both near, and they both ſeek after you, the one for your good, the other for your hurt. I need not tell you what theſe are, nor where or how they appear, (ye have been abundantly, and as ye wait on the Lord, are daily inſtructed therein, bleſſed be the name of the Lord) but in continual watching to the one, and againſt the other, is the diligence and care of your ſpirits daily to be exerciſed. Oh! at no time let your ſpirits be looſe and careleſs! For the enemy waits to do hurt, and the Lord waits to be gracious, and to do your ſouls good. Watch, therefore, and pray, that ye enter not into the temptation of the enemy, nor miſs of the tender mercies and loving-kindneſſes of the Lord, which are ſure to the ſeed (and to all that are of and abide in the ſeed) for ever.

Oh! who would miſs of the quickening virtue of our God, of being anointed with his holy oil, and of having the flames of life kindled further in him? Who would be captivated and brought into ſubjection to ſin, Satan, vanity, and the ſpirit of this world again, who hath witneſſed any proportion of deliverance therefrom? Ye know that ye can do nothing of yourſelves: Oh! what need have ſuch to watch to that, which is able to work mightily in the heart, and to bring forth the fruits and effects of righteouſneſs, and to bring under, and keep under, kill and ſlay that power of unrighteouſneſs, and to root out and bury the dead, out of the ſight and remembrance of the living. Glorious things are teſtified (truly teſtified) concerning the power of the Lord, and his mighty operation inwardly in the hearts of his children, in this day of the preaching of the everlaſting goſpel again, after the long night of darkneſs. Let none be content, without witneſſing and experiencing a meaſure thereof in their own particular. Oh! dwell not with death, vanity, nor corruption! Oh! my dear friends, let not vain or earthly thoughts lodge in any of your hearts!

hearts! but dwell with him who is pure, who is living, and gives life to your ſouls; and alſo gives peace, and brings it home to you, leaving upon your ſpirits that "peace which paſſeth all the underſtanding" and comprehenſion of man, and who maketh his called, choſen, and faithful ones glad with his deliverance from the power and temptation of the enemy, and with the flowings in of life and redeeming virtue, from the fountain thereof. Judea (the city) is known among the living, *whoſe walls are ſalvation, and all the gates and entrance into it praiſe.*

And, my dear friends, mind your meetings together, to wait upon your God with great ſerioufneſs and intention of ſpirit, every one watching to feel life up in your own ſpirits. Oh! ſit down (yea, breathe earneſtly to the Lord to give you to ſit down) in the ſilence of fleſh, and in the ſtillneſs of your ſpirits, waiting for the preſence, appearance, and power of your God to be revealed in the midſt of you, that your hearts may be ſearched more and more, and the pure judgment revealed againſt whatever would appear or riſe up contrary to the holy nature and will of God, and that which is for death, brought into death more and more, and ſo the bread and water of life given to that which is to be nouriſhed up in life, that all that is impure may be kept down, and that which is pure (the plants and trees of righteouſneſs) may thrive, flouriſh, and ſpread more and more, and you ſit down under the ſhadow of your own vine and olive-tree, partaking of the ſap and fatneſs thereof.

Oh! that every one of you, in all your meetings together, might witneſs that ſcripture fulfilled in you; "They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs "of thy houſe, and thou ſhalt give them, or make "them to drink, of the rivers of thy pleaſure."

And I beſeech you, in the bowels of tender love, take heed of ſluggiſhneſs, or careleſſneſs, or deadneſs of ſpirit in your meetings; theſe things in no wiſe become the Lord's people, nor your profeſſions of waiting upon the living God; ye are to look up, to

watch, wait, and breathe for the Lord, to be exerciſed by his Spirit, to have to do with him before whom all things are naked and bare, to offer up that acceptable ſacrifice of a broken heart, of pure praiſes, of love, life, humility, thankſgiving, &c. and to receive what the Father of mercies ſtands ready (in and through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of his love) to give forth unto you. Can you be thus exerciſed, while in a drowſy, ſluggiſh, careleſs ſpirit? Do not ſuch diſhonour the Lord, whoſe name ye ſhould honour? And is not the jealous God provoked and grieved by ſuch things as theſe, whom ye ſhould walk in all humility, tenderneſs of ſpirit, and well-pleaſingneſs before?

I beſeech you, therefore, watch againſt all things of this nature, and be diligent, that ye may witneſs the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus making you free, and fencing you againſt all things of this kind, that ye may be a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, a temple of living ſtones, wherein the living God may dwell and walk, and ſup with you, and give unto you to ſup with him, where ye ſhall eat the pure bread of life, and drink the wine of the kingdom, which will glad your hearts exceedingly, and the joy of the Lord will become your ſtrength; which ſtrength will carry you above the ſtrength of the enemy, and cauſe you to bring forth the fruits of life, and righteouſneſs, naturally to the Lord; and ſo you ſhall ſhine as lights in your ſeveral places, and ſhew forth the praiſes of him, who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light; for it is a marvellous light indeed, which the Lord hath cauſed to ſhine in the ſpirits of his children, whom in this day of his power he hath begotten to himſelf, and the life eternal is wrapped up in it; and they that truly know it, know it to be no leſs than the light of life, even the light which came from the pure life of the Son, and leads to the habitation and dwelling-place of the Father.

There

There is one thing yet remains with me, which I would fain have you grow in a true, ſenſible, and experimental underſtanding of, which is this; to wit, What it is not to touch the unclean thing. The enemy will be ſtirring up, and caſting in that which is unclean, upon the veſſels which God is purifying and preſerving from all pollution. But there is a ſtarting back from, and eſchewing the evil, a forſaking of the vain earthly mind and thoughts, and a receiving in ſuch temptations and ſuggeſtions no more. Oh! that ye might all experimentally know and witneſs what this is! I know many of you do in ſome meaſure, bleſſed be the God of our mercies, bleſſed be our Saviour and Redeemer, for ever and ever! But oh! more, more, more of this knowledge, more of this experience, my heart livingly breathes for, for myſelf and you, that we may witneſs the ſcripture abundantly fulfilled in our hearts from the Lord: "Whoſoever is born of "God doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remains in "him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God." Oh! feel the weight of this ſcripture, in that which gives the underſtanding of it! The Lord hath made a new covenant, and a living covenant, and prepared a new and living way for the ranſomed to walk in without erring, that he might amend all (in this new people) which was amiſs in thoſe under the firſt covenant.

Oh! let the Lord enjoy the deſign of his heart, and his people ſo wait upon him, that they may all be renewed in the ſpirit of their minds, and the Lord may have a generation of Calebs and Joſhuas, who may fully follow after him in all things, and who may witneſs his power and preſence ſtill with them, and the holy, tender, merciful God may never be provoked by them, to cauſe him to withdraw his good Spirit from them, and ſo to leave them and forſake them; for if any draw back from the Lord, and from the holy commandment of life, the Lord's ſoul can have no pleaſure in ſuch. Oh! that, therefore, there may be none among you drawing back to perdition! and take

heed of deadneſs, drowſineſs, ſluggiſhneſs of ſpirit, earthlineſs, fleſhly wiſdom, unbelief, &c. (for that is a degree thereof, and leadeth thitherwards) but all to grow in faith, with diligence, towards the ſaving of your ſouls, (which is far nearer than when you firſt believed) which ye ſhall be ſure in due time to reap even the ſalvation ye wait for, if ye faint not, nor grow weary in your minds, but abide in the faith and patience, unto the end of your trials, both inward and outward, which are meaſured out by the Spirit and wiſdom of the Lord, and not by the wiles of your enemies, whom the Lord ſtops and chains at his pleaſure.

The grace, mercy, love, and peace of God our Father, and of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, be multiplied unto you, and fill your hearts from day to day, according to your ſeveral capacities, and enlarge your capacities, and bring you more and more into the heavenly fellowſhip, that your joy therein may abound, and ye may daily rejoice in the goodneſs of the Lord, and in his exerciſing loving-kindneſs, judgment, and righteouſneſs in the earth.

This is from your brother and companion in the afflictions, and alſo in the joy and glory of this day of the ſalvation of our God, which is further to be revealed and enjoyed by thoſe who meekly and patiently wait for it,

I. P.

Reading-gaol, the 22d of the Third month, 1671.

And all my dear friends, who have known what it is to be uncovered and ſtript of your own righteouſneſs, (and of all fleſhly robes and garments) and to put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, even the innocency and righteouſneſs of his nature and Spirit, and ſo to appear before the Lord, and walk with him in the garment which he puts upon you; oh!

oh! friends, keep this garment about you, that ye be not ſtripped and robbed of that wherewith God once clothed you, and ſo your nakedneſs appear, and men ſee your ſhame; and inſtead of being an honour, ye become (any of you) a reproach to the name and truth of the Lord, which is very honourable, and ſhould be honoured in and by us all.

The direction of this in my heart, was to friends in truth, in Chalfont, and thereaways, among whom my heart hath been greatly comforted and refreſhed, who (ſome of you) had ſome knowledge of my former great miſery and diſtreſs, for want of the power and preſence of the Lord, and are now witneſſes with me of his tender mercy and great ſalvation; glory to him who ſits on the throne, and to the Lamb whoſe kingdom is exalted over all, who already reigns in righteouſneſs in the hearts of a remnant; who ſit down, and find reſt and peace, and true joy of heart, ſoul, and ſpirit, under the ſhadow of his government, and cannot but ſing and ſound forth praiſes, pure praiſes, honour, and dominion, and ſtrength, to the name and arm which hath done the valiant acts, bringing ſin, corruption, death, and the grave under, and bringing life and immortality to rule and have dominion over it; ſo that he that is pure power and life, is felt tabernacling and living in his people, and he gives unto them to live in, and through, and with him; and they cannot but ſound praiſes to the power and glory of his life from day to day; glory in the higheſt to our God, and to his Chriſt, for ever and ever, Amen, Hallelujah.

SOME QUERIES CONCERNING COMPULSION in RELIGION.

Query 1. WHETHER every man ought not to endeavour to be fully perſuaded in his own ſoul concerning the religion and worſhip which he performs and offers up to God?

Query 2. Whether, when a man is fully perſuaded concerning the religion and worſhip he ought to perform to God, whether he is not then bound in conſcience ſo to worſhip and ſerve God, as he is fully perſuaded in his own ſoul?

Query 3. Whether, if a man ſhould leave that way of religion and worſhip, whereof he is fully perſuaded in his own ſoul, and ſhould worſhip according to the law and worſhip of the country wherein he lives, whether this would be accepted of the Lord, and whether his ſoul would not be in danger of the diſpleaſure and wrath of the Lord therefore?

Query 4. Whether God hath given any man or men power, by laws and penalties, to compel men to worſhip him contrary to the belief of their hearts and the full perſuaſion of their ſouls? Is it not written, that whatſoever is not of faith is ſin? And hath God given any men power and authority to compel others to ſin? Surely the end of magiſtracy is to reſtrain men from ſin, and not to compel men to ſin.

Query

Query 5. Whether under the law of Moſes, the worſhip was not firſt made manifeſtly clear to mens hearts and conſciences, and they fully perſuaded thereof; before they ſuffered any penalties annexed for failing in it, or turning aſide from it?

Query 6. Whether under the goſpel, Chriſt or his apoſtles did ever compel any by outward force to their way of worſhip, or give any rule for compulſion after their days. Did not they ſay, they were not lords over mens faith, but that there was one Lord and Maſter, even Chriſt, to whom every man was to give an account? Now if men ſhould commend us for worſhipping as they teach us, and by laws require of us contrary to the belief and full perſuaſion of our own ſouls, and Chriſt condemn and puniſh us therefore, would it not go hard with us?

Query 7. Was it not the beaſt that compelled men to worſhip, and is he not branded therefore, Rev. xiii.? But could he by his laws and penalties compel any, whoſe names are written in the book of life, to his worſhip? others indeed he did compel, and cauſe to worſhip, as may be ſeen in that chapter.

Query 8. Is not Chriſt's kingdom ſpiritual? Are not the weapons of his warfare ſpiritual? Are they not mighty through God, to convince and eſtabliſh men in the truth, and in the way of the goſpel-worſhip? Would Chriſt have any people forced by outward compulſion, to ſerve or worſhip him? Whoſoever will, let him come, ſaith he; and his people are a willing people, and God loveth a chearful giver and a chearful worſhipper. Is not compulſion a great argument againſt that church and miniſtry that uſeth it, that they want the ſpiritual weapons? That they want the authority and power of the true church and miniſtry, and ſo are fain to ſupply it by the authority and power of man? For that which is of man, if it were not held up by man, would fall; but the truth will grow and increaſe, and that which is of God will ſtand and out-live all the violence and oppoſitions of men. And one thing is worthy of very ſerious conſideration con-

cerning this worſhip, which there is ſuch ſtriving to compel men to, which is this; what kind of perſons they are that diſſent from it, and what they are, for the generality, that ſo cry it up. Are not many of them very looſe, profane, ſwearers, curſers, exceſſive drinkers, yea ſome of them Atheiſts? Is there not a ground of jealouſy at leaſt, if not a ſtrong argument, againſt that worſhip and way of religion which pleaſeth theſe?

Can that which came from God, and is of God, pleaſe corrupt man? And who are they that diſſent from, and dare not practiſe it? Are they not men of tender conſciences, and that fear to offend the Lord, and who ſeek after that religion and worſhip, wherein there is truth, life, virtue, and power? Now which of theſe are likelieſt to know the truth, and to be taught of the Lord the true worſhip?

Oh! that theſe things were ſeriouſly conſidered of; for though men were wicked and profane themſelves, yet if they did not oppoſe that which is good, but could ſuffer others quietly to ſerve and fear the Lord, neither their ſin nor danger would be ſo great.

Reading gaol, 19th of the
Seventh month, 1670.

I. P.

He that ruleth over men muſt be juſt, ruling in the fear of God; now he that is juſt and ruleth in the fear of God, cannot afflict or puniſh any for fearing God, or for worſhip which they perform to him in his fear. Shall not he that made the world, be worſhipped by his children and ſervants, according as he requires of them? But ſhall the authorities of this world oppoſe him therein, and with all their might ſtop and hinder (as much as in them lies) his children and ſervants from obeying him? Now the Lord God of heaven and earth (who is above all, and hath power over all) knoweth, that not in oppoſition to authority, but in the

the fear of his name, do we (who are called QUAKERS) meet together to worſhip him as he hath required of us; and that if we ſhould not ſo do, we ſhould ſin againſt him, and be guilty of rebellion againſt the King of kings, who is able to ſave and deſtroy body and ſoul for ever. And in this caſe it is that Chriſt hath bid us not fear him that can kill the body, and can go no further, but rather to fear him who can kill both body and ſoul, and caſt them into hell.

Oh! that the magiſtrates of this nation were juſt, ruling in the fear of God! could they then afflict thoſe that fear him as they do, even ſuch as are taught by him to love and pray for their enemies? Is there not work enough for the magiſtrate's ſword againſt manifeſt wicked men, but it muſt ſtill be turned againſt thoſe that fear the Lord? Will ye provoke the Lord to the utmoſt? Are ye ſtronger than he? Will ye put it to the proof, whether he be able to deliver his people or no? Remember, the nations are but as the drop of a bucket, and as the ſmall duſt of the balance before him? What then is the wiſdom and ſtrength of one, two, three, or four nations, to his wiſdom and ſtrength?

This is written in our hearts, that God is to have his due, as well as Cæſar his; and that God is to have his due in the firſt place, but Cæſar after God, and in ſubjection to God. But if there be an abſolute neceſſity put upon us by men, (which they ought not to do, either of diſobeying God or Cæſar, we do really believe that queſtion of ſome of the apoſtles, in this caſe, to be very weighty, and worthy to be duly conſidered, Acts iv. 19. Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye (for we cannot but obey the Lord our God in what he hath required and doth require of us). And truly if we ſhould ſo do, great and dreadful woe would be upon our ſouls, and we ſhould loſe the

the enjoyment of God's preſence, and the peace which paſſeth all underſtanding; which we cannot but value above our eſtates, liberties, or whatever outward thing we can enjoy or poſſeſs in this world, even above our very lives; yea, it were far better for every one of us to loſe our lives in our faithful teſtimony to the true worſhip of God in Spirit and truth, which he hath taught us, and required us to practiſe and give our teſtimony to, than to be found unfaithful and diſobedient to him therein.

I. P.

Reading gaol, the 12th of the 7th month, 1670.

CONCERN-

CONCERNING THE

DISPENSATION of the GOSPEL,

OR THE

DISPENSATION of the SON in SPIRIT,

WHICH IS THE

LAST DISPENSATION,

WHEREBY THE

MYSTERY of GOD, the MYSTERY of the Work of Redemption, is finiſhed in the Heart, all created anew inwardly, all ſubdued that is contrary to GOD, the Soul brought into, or tranſlated into, the Everlaſting Kingdom, and the Kingdom at length delivered up to the FATHER, and GOD becomes All in All; where all Names ceaſe, and the Pure Eternal Being is known, united to, and lived in, after an unutterable Manner.

CONCERNING THE

DISPENSATION of the GOSPEL, &c.

TO know the Father (even the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt) as the fountain or original ſpring of light, life, love, wiſdom, power, holineſs, righteouſneſs, and all ſpiritual and heavenly bleſſings:

To know the Son as the way to the Father, as the way to life, peace, and bleſſedneſs in the Father:

To know the Son's Spirit, and the Father's alſo, whereby the Father draws to the Son, and the Son brings to the Father; whereby the Son quickens, begets, renews, ſanctifies, deſtroys, cuts down, burns up that which is droſſy, corrupt, and chaffy; yea, not only the fruits of ſin, but the very root itſelf, yea the very earth in which the root grows, and the heavens that water the earth are conſumed and paſs away inwardly, and a new heaven and a new earth is inwardly planted and formed, wherein dwells righteouſneſs; ſo that the cage of unclean birds, the place where the dragons lay, is ſhaken and removed, and the place of the wicked inwardly known no more; but inſtead thereof there are new heavens and earth, even of the new creation of God; which earth brings forth the increaſe of life, the fruits of life, the ſeeds and trees of righteouſneſs, of God's ſowing, planting, grafting, pruning, and cauſing to grow, that he may be glorified: I ſay,

Thus to know the Father, thus to know the Son, thus to know the Holy Spirit of light, life, love, and righteouſneſs, &c. not notionally in the brain, or with

with a comprehenſive knowledge of the mind, but livingly in the heart, in the light that ſhines from the Father and Son, in the life that ſprings from them, in the love which is of them (for, indeed, it is love that gives the bright, purely ſenſible and uniting knowledge): this is precious knowledge; and all knowledge of the very ſame things, any otherwiſe than as coming from, and held in, this ſpringing life, is of no compariſon with the excellency (for nature and virtue) of this kind of knowledge.

Now there have been two great diſpenſations of the Father, Son, and Spirit. The one figurative, the other ſubſtantial. The one called the law, the other the goſpel. For under the law the Father was made known, the Son made known, the Spirit made known; but all in figures and outward ways of manifeſtation. God was to that people of the Jews a fountain of living waters; and when they forſook him, and truſted in lying vanities, they forſook the fountain of their own mercies. They then forſook the fountain of living waters, digging to themſelves broken ciſterns that could hold no water.

So the Son was made known under the types and figures of the law, as the King of righteouſneſs, as the high-prieſt of God, as the prophet that God would raiſe up, as the ſpiritual rock which yielded the ſpiritual waters, of which the ſoul was to drink. And they that were a-thirſt were to come to him and buy wine and milk of him, and incline their ear to him, that they might hear and live, and he would make an everlaſting covenant with them, even the ſure mercies of David.

So the Spirit of God, which was typified under a pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderneſs, did ſtrive with man before the law, and was given to the Jews to inſtruct them, and to plough up their fallow ground, and circumciſe them inwardly, and to waſh their hearts from wickedneſs and vain thoughts, that they might not lodge in them.

But

But all this was not properly (in the Spirit and power of it) the diſpenſation of the law; but hid in a myſtery, and running under ground, as I may ſo ſay. This was from another covenant, and part of another covenant than the covenant of the law, though in the time of the law. For there was another covenant which Moſes declared of, beſides the covenant of the law made in Horeb, which was the word of life, or word of faith in the mouth and heart, which teacheth the ſubſtance of the law, and alſo gives power to fulfill the righteouſneſs of the law, to them that hear and receive its voice, in the faith which it gives or begets. And ſo the Father of Spirits was known in the time of the law. Chriſt the redeemer was known to live, yea to live in the heart in the time of the law. The free Spirit, the Spirit of love was received, and the preſence of God felt and enjoyed by God's Calebs, Joſhuas, and Davids (by men after God's own heart) in the time of the law. Moſes had his meekneſs and tenderneſs, and was made faithful in all God's houſe by the Spirit of Chriſt, the meek lamb-like Spirit.

Now when the ſhadows came to an end, Chriſt the ſubſtance was to come. The everlaſting King, the everlaſting high-prieſt, the everlaſting prophet was to appear. The everlaſting rock and holy builder was to appear, and raiſe up David's tabernacle in Spirit, and miniſter in the true ſanctuary, by his light, by his life, by his power, by his righteous Spirit. There is not another tabernacle to be built, not another temple, not another Jeruſalem than the heavenly Jeruſalem, not another Mount Sion to be known or come to, than the goſpel Mount Sion; not another God, than God the judge of all in the goſpel-ſtate; not another word or law of life, than the law which goeth forth out of Sion, and the word that iſſueth out from this heavenly Jeruſalem; not another water to waſh the ſoul with, not another blood to ſprinkle the conſcience with, not another ſpirit to enlighten, quicken, keep alive, and comfort, than the Spirit of light, life, and love from

from God, which reconciles unto God, and brings into the gospel-righteousness, rest and peace, and establisheth the soul therein.

So now, feeling the Spirit of the Son, and being led by him to the Father, and the Father with the Son, by the Holy Spirit, creating me anew, enlightening me, quickening me, raising me in life, circumcising my heart to love, I am come to life, and at rest in him that lives in me, and works in me, and gives me to live, and work, and rest in him. For there are the sabbath-day's works, even works of love, works of life, works of righteousness and holiness, works that the Lord works in the souls in whom he dwells and rests, and which they in the pure rest, peace, and joy of life, work in the Lord their God, who works all their works in them and for them.

Now in this gospel-dispensation, or in this dispensation of the Son in Spirit, all other dispensations are gathered and wrapped up, and thoroughly experienced by the soul that travels with and is led by Christ, in this his gospel-dispensation.

As first, There is Moses in Spirit known and travelled through. There is the ministration of the law in the Spirit inwardly commanding known, heard, felt, received, before the gospel-power is given to perform. And here is hard travel and sore exercises. Here the Father is known commanding, and the soul consents and would fain obey, but finds the law in the members rebelling against the law which the mind hath a sense of, and desires after.

Then afterwards comes the dispensation of the prophets, wherein there are prophecies of a better state to come, openings of the mercy and love which is to be manifested in the latter days, at the end of these trials and exercises, wherein the soul hath promises from God, that the righteousness shall be revealed, that power to become a son shall be given, and the enemy's strength broken, and the bowed down soul raised up from under his oppression, and the Lord shall tread

tread him under the feet of the poor and needy, and the hungry and thirſty ſhall be filled with righteouſneſs, and the meek come to inherit God's earth, and the beggar come from the dunghill, be raiſed up in the power of life, to ſit among princes, even the princes in the heavenly glory of God's everlaſting kingdom.

After this ſucceeds John's miniſtry in Spirit, even the levelling the mountains, the raiſing up the vallies, the preparing the way for the King of glory, that he may come in and reveal his glory inwardly. For not in the time of the law inwardly, nor in the time of the prophecies inwardly; but after the ſoul is exerciſed and prepared inwardly (that being waſted which hindered, that raiſed up which lay low, that made ſtraight which lay crooked, that made plain that was rough, and ſo the way is prepared and fitted for the great appearance of the great God and Saviour, in the pure, bright goſpel glory, Spirit, and power), doth the King come ſuddenly into his temple; not when the foundation is laid, but when Sion is built up, doth God appear in his glory therein. Read Iſa. xl. 3, 4, 5. and conſider. After John's coming in a body of fleſh, and preparing the way by his outward miniſtry, Chriſt came in a body of fleſh, and was revealed as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, by the life, Spirit, and power that that body was filled with. And after John comes in Spirit, and prepares the way in any heart, by the mighty and effectual operation of his miniſtry there, then Chriſt comes after him in Spirit, in the great power and glory of the Father, and the Father is revealed, and the Son alſo in the Spirit of light, life, love, and righteouſneſs, and the glory of the Lord is beheld with open face, in the glaſs of life and righteouſneſs, and the ſoul is changed into the ſame image, and partakes of the heavenly glory, and is married or joined to the Lord, to become one ſpirit with him, and hath fellowſhip with the Father and the

Son in the light of life; and this is the gospel-state and glory, and there is not another.

Now take one scripture more which sums up all dispensations, and sets up the dispensation of the Son in Spirit as the last, as the dispensation of the last days. It is Heb. i. 1. read but what things are spoken of to be brought to pass in the last days of the great gospel-glory, to be revealed then of the perfect redeeming to God, and centering in him, of being married to him, and becoming one with him, &c. and of the Son's being the minister in the gospel-state, by the Spirit and power of the endless life, to bring it all forth, and accomplish it in the husbandry and building of God. Consider the place; at sundry times, and in divers manners, God spake in times past by Moses, by the prophets, by John; but now the last days are come, now the last dispensation is come, now the covenant wherein God himself is the teacher, is come, now the time of building the Sion, the Jerusalem, wherein God himself will dwell for ever, is come; now the light of the city of God is come, which is an eternal light, an unchangeable light. Now the Spirit of love, which brings up the gospel-life, is come, and edifies the holy gospel-building, in the gospel-love and life. Oh! the light, oh! the life, oh! the love, oh! the righteousness, oh! the divine nature, which is now revealed and partook of in the Son! He is the brightness of the Father's glory; and thither he brings his. What would ye have more? He destroys antichrist inwardly, by the brightness of his coming or appearing. Oh! the desolations that he makes inwardly of sin and iniquity in the hearts of his! He is the express image (or engraving) of his Father's substance; and he makes thee, who art one with him in his Spirit of life and love, of the same image with him. He translateth thee out of Satan's image, into his very image. His light, his life, his love, his righteousness, his divine nature, doth not wax old as a garment, but endure and remain the same

ſame for ever. He is Alpha and Omega. There was nothing before him, nor ſhall be after him. There is no other thing appertaining to life and godlineſs, but what he now diſpenſeth in the goſpel; no other kingdom, but what ſtands in the power of the life and righteouſneſs, which is now revealed in the peace, love, and joy of the Spirit. The goſpel-building is his houſe; and he is faithful in all his houſe, as a Son, having received all power from his Father, to gather fully, to preſerve fully, to build up fully, to leaven fully with life and righteouſneſs, even in ſoul, body, and ſpirit, to lead into the Holy Land, and to enable to keep the holy ſabbath there, even to ceaſe from ſin, and every thing that burdens the life, and to reſt in God, and not work any thing of ourſelves any more, but to feel the Spirit of life, love, and power work in us. And his yoke of life, his yoke of love, his yoke of the power, is the pure goſpel-liberty comprehended in. The Lord Jeſus did appear in fleſh; but now he appears in Spirit, and is Spirit; giving himſelf to be life and Spirit in his. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and every thing which is of a fleſhly nature, which deceiveth and imbondageth, wherein the pure liberty is not, he diſcovereth, and keepeth his out of, that ſo they may ſtand faſt in the pure liberty of the light, life, and love of his Holy Spirit, wherewith he maketh his free.

The Eighteenth of the
9th Month, 1678.

I. P.

SOME

EXPERIENCES,

Which it hath pleaſed the LORD to give me, concerning his Way, his Truth, his Church and People, againſt whom the Gates of Hell cannot prevail.

Firſt, IT hath pleaſed the Lord to manifeſt to me, that there is a light wherewith he (in his tender mercy, love, and good-will) enlighteneth mankind. This light I have found my own ſoul enlightened with, even from my very childhood, though I never took notice of it to be what it is, till the Lord manifeſted it to me. But ever ſince it pleaſed the Lord to manifeſt it to me, and to turn my mind to it, I have found it to ſhine inwardly in my heart, even as the outward light of the ſun ſhineth outwardly to the outward eye.

Secondly, By this light it hath pleaſed the Lord to give me the diſtinction of things inwardly in my own heart. The Lord hath ſhewn me by it evil and good in my own heart, and taught me to chuſe the good, and refuſe the evil. So that as my eye hath been turned to this light, and kept to this light, I have known and walked in the way of life; for the power which hath appeared in this light, hath created me anew, made me a child of light, and taught and cauſed me to walk in this light, as God is in the light. And in this light I have experienced fellowſhip with the Father who is light, and with his Son who is light alſo, and with all the children of light.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, In this light (being gathered out of darkneſs into it, and abiding in it) I have had remiſſion of ſins. For no ſin is laid to the charge of any ſoul that abides in this light, but only to ſuch as continue in darkneſs, or go out from it into darkneſs. This I have had the conſtant experience of from my firſt diſtinct knowledge of God's truth; for I never found, at any time, any condemnation, while I abode in the pure light of God's Holy Spirit, and bleſſed witneſs; but if at any time I hearkened to the enemy, the prince of darkneſs, and went by his allurements into darkneſs, I ſtill met with condemnation there.

Fourthly, In this light I have received power to become a Son to God. Oh! it is unutterable to relate what power is here received againſt the ſoul's enemies, and to do the will of God! Indeed, in the light there is power; yea, full power, ſuitable to every ſoul's condition. There needs no more power (no not to the higheſt condition) than what is laid up, and to be received in this light. All the power of darkneſs is communicated in the darkneſs, to the children of darkneſs; and all the power of light is communicated in the light, to the children of light. In the light there is an holy will and ability given daily more and more, and the unholy will and ability (which troubleth the holy ſeed) removed out of the way.

Fifthly, In this light I know the true church, the holy gathering by the goſpel-ſpirit and power; for none are the true church in the goſpel-days but ſuch. The law-church was a company of Jews after the fleſh, circumciſed in fleſh, to keep the outward law of commandments; but the goſpel-church is a company of believers after the Spirit, circumciſed in Spirit, to keep the inward law, even the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, which makes free from the law of ſin and death. So that all the goſpel-church are children of the true woman, growing up in the holy liberty from the bondage of ſin and corruption, unto the royal law of holineſs and righteouſneſs. So that being in the light, I ſee the children of light, and

know that the holy gathering, even the goſpel-church, are ſuch, and that none elſe can be of the goſpel-church, having (out of the light) nothing of the nature of the goſpel-church or Spirit in them. Ye may as well make a man without the nature of a man, as a Chriſtian without the nature of a Chriſtian. He was not a Jew outward under the law, without the nature of a Jew outward; nor is he a Jew inward under the goſpel, without the nature of a Jew inward. And as the law-church conſiſted of Jews outward, ſo the goſpel-church conſiſted of Jews inward; which are children of light, and not of darkneſs, and can be known only by them who are in the true light. So that the Lord having mercifully gathered me into his goſpel-light, theſe things (in his goſpel-light) have been clearly ſeen by me.

Sixthly, In this light I know the goſpel-worſhip, the worſhip which lies not in the darkneſs of man's apprehenſions, but in the light which ſhines from God in the heart. For the children of God are taught in the light, know God their Father in his own pure light, and worſhip in the light, wherein they are taught by him to know him. They worſhip in the truth. They are led by the Spirit of light and truth, out of darkneſs, out of deceit, out of all kind of error and unrighteouſneſs; and they worſhip in truth, and in the Spirit, into which they are led, and in which there is no deceit nor error. They gather together in the Son's name (in his living name, oh! wait to underſtand that)! And there the Son is in the midſt of them, and his life and Spirit intercedes in them; and in his name they offer up the righteous ſacrifices; the holy ſacrifices of life, and the pure incenſe, in which the Father is greatly delighted, and ſmells a ſweet ſmell and ſavour of reſt.

Seventhly, In this light I have experienced the good conſcience, even the conſcience which anſwers to truth, and will not anſwer to unrighteouſneſs. Indeed in this light I have felt my heart ſprinkled from an evil conſcience (I teſtify it in deep humility of ſpirit, and

and in great thankfulneſs towards the Lord). The darkneſs defiles and ſtains; but in the pure light the heart is waſhed, cleanſed, and ſanctified, from whence ariſeth the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God. And in this light the conſcience is ſtill kept good; but though it hath its habitation in the light, if it keep not its habitation, but go out from thence into the darkneſs, it is ſoon defiled and corrupted again.

Eighthly, I have, and (bleſs the Lord) daily do ſtill experience faith, the heavenly faith of the new birth, the precious gift of God to his own children, in this pure bleſſed light of the Son of God, which ſhines from the heavenly glory into the hearts of his redeemed ones. Unbelief came at firſt from the darkneſs, and lodgeth in the darkneſs, iſſuing thence into thoſe that give ear to the dark ſpirit; but faith ſprings from the holy root of life in the heart. Here I cannot but believe, and alſo know him in whom I do believe, who is the holy power of life and light, who oppoſeth and overcometh the prince of darkneſs, who hath the power of death. And in the light God carries on the work of faith with power; and unbelief, which ſtops it, is not able to enter the minds of thoſe, who are ſtayed upon the Lord in his pure light.

Ninthly, In the light I taſte and enjoy the pure peace, which paſſeth man's underſtanding. In the darkneſs is condemnation and trouble, as man's mind comes to be awakened; but in the light is righteouſneſs, juſtification, and peace, to all that dwell and abide there. Perfect peace the mind here grows up into, which the enemy cannot break or interrupt. Indeed, in the darkneſs, out of the light, the peace that is there is eaſily broken; but never in the light is the true peace broken.

Tenthly, In the light I have experience of the killing or mortifying of that which is contrary to the light. "I kill, I make alive, ſaith the Lord." Indeed he doth ſo in and by his light. Doth not light expel darkneſs in the figure? Much more doth it ſo in the ſubſtance. Light drives away darkneſs, baniſh-

eth darkneſs, deſtroyeth darkneſs, in the mind that is truly enlightened by the Lord, and ſingly gives up to his light. Oh! the deſolations of darkneſs (the works of darkneſs, the power of darkneſs) that God makes in the hearts of ſuch as are ſenſible of, and ſubject to, the light of his Son ſhining there. The Lord there cuts his work ſhort in righteouſneſs, making an end of the kingdom of darkneſs, revealing his own kingdom inſtead thereof, and gathering and tranſlating the mind thereinto.

Eleventhly, In the light I have experience of the new creation in Chriſt Jeſus, even the paſſing away of the old things, and the new things coming inſtead thereof. The old heart gone, the hard heart gone, and a new and tender one inſtead thereof. The old law of ſin and death taken out of the way, and the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus received in the place thereof. And the fear of the new covenant put into the new heart (in which is the beginning and perfection of the heavenly wiſdom), and the Spirit of God put within, to enlighten, enliven, and fill the mind with life and righteouſneſs, and cauſe it to walk with God in the new and living way, and to know his ſtatutes and judgments, and do them.

Twelfthly, In the light the goſpel-love is known and ſprings. In the darkneſs is enmity; but in the light is love. It is true indeed, that here the whole law is fulfilled, even of loving the Lord God with all the heart, ſoul, mind, and ſtrength, and one's neighbour as one's ſelf. Yea, here one is not only commanded to love enemies, but taught and enabled ſo to do. Yea, keep but here in the light, no enmity can ſpring up, but only love to the greateſt enemies, whom we have no coals of wrath, but only of love to heap upon.

Thirteenthly, Here I meet with, and partake of, a cool, meek, patient, tender, gentle, quiet, lowly ſpirit, which is of the Lord, and of much eſteem with him. This is the Lamb's nature, who is light; and this alſo is their nature who are of the Lamb, and walk in the light

light of the Lamb. All Eſau's roughneſs, all Iſhmael's diſdain and ſcoffing, all Cain's envy and cruelty towards his brother, is of the darkneſs, whereof Cain, Iſhmael, and Eſau are, and wherein they walk, and their offspring; but this is not found in them who are light in the Lord, and who walk in the light, as he is in the light. And in patience to poſſeſs the ſoul, and to be tender towards ſinners, meek, quiet, and humble before the Lord, and of a gentle ſpirit towards all. Oh! who, beſides the children of light, know the precioufneſs of being thus created by the Lord, and of thus walking before him, in the light of the Lord Jeſus, in the renewings of the mind by him, in the life and power, wherein he anew createth and changeth, theſe things become natural. For in the light, whatever is of the darkneſs, whatever is corrupt, whatever is of the devil's kingdom, is diſcovered and removed from them that take up the light's yoke; and a contrary nature planted in the mind inſtead thereof, which brings forth quite other fruits, even of a contrary kind to what the darkneſs brought forth before. So that as it was ſaid of Chriſt, Behold the Lamb of God; ſo it may be ſaid of them, behold the lambs of God, who are ſweet, meek, gentle, lowly in heart like him, bringing forth fruits like him, and walking like ſheep among wolves, as he alſo walked.

Laſtly, (To mention no more) Here, in the light, I meet with certainty, aſſurance, ſatisfaction; yea, infallibility. I meet with the evidence and demonſtration of God's Spirit, which is infallible. I meet with God's witneſs, which is an infallible witneſs. I meet with God's Spirit, which is an infallible Spirit, who infallibly leads into all truth, and infallibly guides in the truth. I meet with an infallible ſhepherd, who hath an infallible voice, and gives to his ſheep an infallible ear, wherewith they infallibly hear. He opens an infallible eye, and gives to it an infallible ſight of God, and the heavenly myſteries of his kingdom. The Spirit breathes infallibly, begets infallibly, leads infallibly, creates a new heart, a right ſpirit; which heart,

heart, which ſpirit, is of God's infallible nature, like him; for that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. That which is born of man's fallible ſpirit and wiſdom is fallible; but that which is born of God's Spirit and heavenly wiſdom, is of the nature of his Spirit and wiſdom; and hence it is that wiſdom is juſtified of her children. The apoſtle ſpeaks to the Galatians of having begun in the Spirit, chap. iii. 3. and did they not begin in that which is infallible? And if they went on in the Spirit, did they not go on in that which is infallible? I never found the light deceive me, nor did I ever find the birth of God's Spirit, the holy elect ſeed, deceived in me. And the new and living way, wherein this birth walks, is infallible, in which there is no erring by thoſe who eye the Lord, and follow his Spirit therein. This is the way caſt up, (the way of holineſs, life, and peace, for the ranſomed and redeemed of the Lord to walk in, in the goſpel-days, in which the wayfaring men, though fools, ſhall not err, Iſa. xxxv. 8. The Lord, who hath promiſed, is able to make it good. The Lord make it more and more manifeſt, and bring more and more people into it, and keep them in the guidance of his bleſſed Spirit of truth, that they may ſee his light, and walk therein, and not let in any temptations from the ſpirit of darkneſs, and ſo follow him, and miſs of the guide unto, and the preſerver in, the new and living way.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

I DO not ſay that I, as a man, am infallible, or that any of us as men are infallible; but God's light, God's grace, God's truth, God's Spirit, God's wiſdom and power, is infallible; and ſo far as we partake of that, are gathered into, and abide in that, we partake of that which is infallible, and are gathering into, and abide in that, which is infallible. And oh! let not men reſt in, or be contented with, that knowledge which is fallible, but preſs after unity and fellowſhip with the Lord in his infallible ſpirit; there being no true union nor fellowſhip with him in any thing that is fallible.

Oh! that Proteſtants, Papiſts, Jews, Turks, Indians, did all know and own this light, that there might be an end of the darkneſs and miſery, wherewith mankind hath been ſo long overwhelmed; and happineſs both in particular nations, and in the whole world, might be experienced in the ſtead thereof. For mens erring from the light and ſpirit of God, hath been the cauſe of all their miſery; and their returning to the light and Spirit of God (from which all have erred) will take away the cauſe of their miſery, and in it (as they faithfully ſubject to the Lord and travel therein) they ſhall find his power, love, and mercy revealed, towards their reſtoring unto happineſs.

Thirty-firſt of the 5th Month, 1679.

I. P.

CONCERNING

CONCERNING THE

TIMES and SEASONS,

Both which have Been, and which are yet to Be.

WHEN God made man in his own image, placing him in paradiſe, and giving him dominion over the works of his hands; then was a time of great joy to Adam and Eve, and ſhould have ſtill been ſo to them, and all mankind, had they continued in the ſtate wherein they were created.

When Eve, and by her means Adam, hearkened to the voice of the ſerpent, diſobeyed the Lord their Creator, aſpiring after wiſdom, and the knowledge of good and evil, out of God's way; then was a ſeaſon of miſery to Adam and all his poſterity; the holy and heavenly image being loſt, and a curſed image gained in the ſtead thereof, and ſo man thruſt out of paradiſe, and the bleſſedneſs thereof, into the earth, which was curſed for man's ſake. So in this ſtate, ſin and the curſe is man's portion, inſtead of the holineſs and bleſſedneſs, which his Creator had allotted him.

When God promiſed the bleſſed ſeed, and revealed himſelf to the fathers in the faith, begetting ſons to himſelf, who heard his voice, obeyed and walked with him; then was a bleſſed time and ſeaſon to them, though ſin and death reigned in the world. But when the ſons of God alſo forgat him, and mingled their ſeed with the corrupted world, then the deluge came, ſweeping away all but Noah with his family, and the creatures ſaved in the ark.

When the Lord choſe the Jews to be a people to himſelf, from amidſt all nations, delivering them by his

his out-ſtretched arm out of Egypt, deſtroying Pharaoh and his hoſt, and led them through the wilderneſs, fitting the ſucceeding generation for the good land, bringing them into it, bleſſing and eſtabliſhing them in it, while they feared him and walked in covenant with him, then was a bleſſed time and ſeaſon with that people. But when they provoked God, brought his judgments often, and at laſt utter ruin and deſolation upon themſelves, then were ſeaſons of great miſery and diſtreſs, and at laſt of utter deſtruction to them.

While the Gentiles were caſt off, and were no people, being of the corrupt ſeed which God hath not choſen, nor had any delight in, and while they knew not the living God, but worſhipped ſtocks and ſtones, and ſo were liable to the pouring down of his wrath and indignation upon all occaſions, and to utter ruin and deſtruction, when their iniquities were full, it was a ſad time and ſeaſon with them, wherein they were eſtranged from the life of God, and his holy covenant of promiſe, and were without God in the world.

When the Lord preached the goſpel to the Gentiles, by his holy apoſtles and miniſters, manifeſting Chriſt to them, the hope of glory, the myſtery hid from ages and generations, engrafting them into the holy vine and olive-tree, giving them to partake of the ſweetneſs and fatneſs thereof, even of the riches of his grace and goodneſs in his Son, who is eternal life, and gives eternal life to all his; then was ſuch a time and ſeaſon of love, grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (both towards Jews and Gentiles) as had not been known in the world before.

When the Chriſtian church apoſtatized, the love in many waxing cold, men minding the name of Chriſtianity, and form of godlineſs, but not the life and power, and ſo the Lord was provoked againſt them, to remove their candleſtick out of its place, and give up the outward court to the Gentiles, and ſo the Spirit was loſt and departed from, the life loſt, the power loſt,

loſt, the everlaſting goſpel hid from mens eyes, and darkneſs and mens inventions ſet up inſtead thereof, in nations, tongues, and people, and the witneſſes to any appearances of God's living truth and holy power perſecuted; then was a ſad time, then was a ſeaſon of death and darkneſs reigning over all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, and the cup of fornication drunk by them all, and all generally bewitched by it, except thoſe whoſe names are written in the Lamb's book of life. This was the greateſt time of darkneſs (wherein the myſtery of iniquity moſt deeply wrought in the deepeſt ways of deceit) that ever was in the world.

When the church comes again out of the wilderneſs, when the Spirit and power of God builds up again the goſpel-church in its primitive glory, when the everlaſting goſpel is preached again to all nations, kindreds, tongues and languages, in the authority and power of God, when the Spirit of the Lord is poured out plentifully on his ſons and daughters, and they propheſy, walk, and live in it, when God dwells and walks in his people, and his true light ſhines in them, diſpelling the darkneſs thoroughly, and filling them with the glory and majeſty of the Lord, and they aſcend up, out of the world's ſpirit and nature, into his ſpirit and nature, even in the ſight of their enemies, and the full wrath of the Lamb be poured out on Babylon, and the full glory revealed in Sion; then ſhall there be ſuch a day of brightneſs and pure heavenly glory, as ſhall dazzle the eyes of all beholders.

But the paſſing away of this night, and the bringing forth of this day, will be very terrible and dreadful, both in particulars and nations. The kingdoms of this world muſt indeed become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Chriſt; but it will require great power to bring it about. The wrath and ſtrength of the ſpirit of darkneſs will be working againſt the Lord and his power to the utmoſt; and the more it works againſt the Lord and his power, the more will the Lord's power, and the wrath of the Lamb, be revealed againſt that ſpirit, and againſt all its devices and undertakings againſt the coun-

ſel

ſel and power of the Lord. Oh! bleſſed are they that are of the Lamb's nature and Spirit, of his righteouſneſs and meekneſs; for the wrath of the Lamb will not be kindled againſt them, but he will be a munition of rocks unto them, and their inward life ſhall be preſerved, and they ſhall enjoy peace with the Lord in the midſt of all that ſhall outwardly befall them.

Meſborow in Kent,
22d of the Sixth
Month, 1679.

The everlaſting goſpel hath been preached in this nation (and alſo other nations), juſt after that very manner as it was foretold it ſhould, Rev. xiv. 26. "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory "to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and "worſhip him that made heaven and earth, and the "ſea, and fountains of waters."

Now they that have heard this bleſſed ſound of the everlaſting goſpel, and have learned to fear God with this fear which the goſpel calls for (which is the fear of the new covenant, which is not taught by the precepts of men, but which God puts into the heart in the new covenant), and to give glory to him, bowing to him, and learning righteouſneſs of him, in the hour of his judgment upon their ſouls, and have worſhipped him, and him only, in his Spirit and truth, which is the goſpel-worſhip, or the worſhip of God according to the everlaſting goſpel; theſe are accounted with God knowers and obeyers of the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe are a peculiar people to God, whom he hath taken an eſpecial care of, and whom he will hide under the ſhadow of his wings, and in the ſecret of his pavilion, while his wrath is poured out upon peoples and nations.

But others that have not been gathered under the ſhadow of God's wings, by the preaching of the everlaſting Goſpel, who have not known or obeyed the ſound thereof; when the ſtorm comes, when the wrath of

of God is revealed againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men (whereof this nation is full, and hath had ſeveral tokens of God's great diſpleaſure for a long time), they will not find a ſhelter, though they flee to the rocks and mountains to hide and cover them from the wrath of the Lamb, but will lie open to the ſtroke of the overflowing ſcourge, which uſeth to overflow nations, after ſuch a deluge of ſin as hath long overflowed this nation. Oh! that men could hear the voice of the rod, and him who hath appointed it, and ſeek an hiding-place, and enter into the chamber of reſt and quietneſs with the Lord, until the indignation be overpaſt.

Now unto any whoſe hearts are touched with the fear of the Lord, and the ſenſe of his righteous judgments and wrath due to this nation (which doubtleſs have come in part already, and are coming faſter and faſter, and entering into the very heart and bowels of it), and who would eſcape the ſtroke of God's dreadful hand, and find inward reſt and peace with him in the day of outward trouble and ſore diſtreſs;

To ſuch, a few words of advice, very early this morning, lay upon my heart.

Firſt, Seek the Lord (Oh! do not ſeek the world, but ſeek the Lord who redeems out of the ſpirit of the world, where the wrath comes, and upon which it is to ſeize)! And "ſeek righteouſneſs, ſeek meekneſs; it "may be ye ſhall be hid in the day of the Lord's an-"ger," Zeph. ii. 3.

Secondly, Wait upon God, that ye may learn of him to "keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it "are the iſſues of life." If ever ye know the iſſues of life, ye muſt know them there; and if ye know the iſſues of life there, and they ſweetly iſſue up, and flow into your ſouls, they will refreſh and delight you in the midſt of all the ſore afflictions, troubles, and diſtreſſes, which can befall you outwardly. Read Pſal. xlvi. and conſider.

Thirdly, Mind who knocks at the door of your hearts, whether it be the deſtroyer or Saviour of the ſoul;

ſoul; for both theſe knock often at the door, but men are not aware thereof. And wait to receive power from God to be faithful door-keepers, that ye may keep the door of your hearts ſhut againſt the enemy, when he knocks with any temptation, and may open them to the Lord, when he knocks with any motion or pure ſtirring of life.

Fourthly, Wait to know, and experience truly, and alſo more and more, the Chriſtian Spirit and ſtate, the ſtate of a ſervant to the Father, and his Son Chriſt, the ſtate of a ſoldier, the ſtate of a pilgrim and holy traveller; to be doing the Lord's work (the Lord's will, and not your own), to be fighting the Lord's battles, againſt his and the ſoul's enemies, and to be travelling further and further out of the ſpirit, mind, and nature of this world (wherein the kingdom of darkneſs ſtands) into God's Spirit, where the kingdom of the dear Son is known and entered into, by thoſe that deny their own wiſdom, and become as little children.

Many have the form of godlineſs, who are not accepted of the Lord; but ſuch only as know God's power, and are led by his Spirit, ſuch are indeed in Chriſt Jeſus; for the holy power grafts the ſoul, mind, and ſpirit of a man, into the holy ſtock and root of life. And ſuch know the new creation in Chriſt, and the works of the new creation, which they perform and walk in (being God's *workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus, unto good works.*) And here the *old things paſs away* (which can paſs away by no other means, but by the revealing of the arm and power of God inwardly in the heart, and by its effectual operation there), *and ſo all things become new.* Now, where all things become new, where the heart is new, the mind and ſpirit new, the deſires new, the joys and delights new, the life and converſation new, and the ſoul walks before the Lord, not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit, even in the newneſs thereof; what is there for the wrath of God to ſeize upon?

Though the Lord be a conſuming fire, yet it is to his enemies, to ſin, to unrighteouſneſs, to the chaffy,

earthly mind and nature; he is not ſo to his children, to the wheat, to the holy ſeed, to them that are new created and cleanſed by him, to them that fear him, love him, walk with him, keep his commandments, obey the goſpel of his Son, denying all for him, and following the Shepherd and Leader of their ſouls, out of all untruth and unrighteouſneſs, into all truth and righteouſneſs. Surely, theſe ſhall not only be able to abide, but dwell with the devouring fire, and everlaſting burnings; and that ſhall be their ſafety and ſhelter, when the flames thereof break forth to conſume and burn up the chaff every where.

25th of the Sixth
Month, 1679.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE goſpel religion is very precious, being inwardly felt and experienced in the life and power of it; but a bare profeſſion of it, out of the life and power of godlineſs, is of no value in the ſight of God, nor is it of any profit or advantage to the ſoul.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

END OF VOL. IV.

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